International Journal of Management and Data Analytics (IJMADA)

Int. J. Management and Data Analytics, Vol. 5 (1), 22-46
ISSN: 2816-9395
Journal Homepage: http://ijmada.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14853766

Narrative Paradigms: Emotional Intelligence and Strategic Imperatives in HR Professional Designation Preparation

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Received: Dec 2024, Published: Feb 2025

ARTICLE INFO
Keywords:
Critical Social Justice Theory, Cultural Capital, Curriculum Integration, Emotional Intelligence, HR Analytics, HR Information Systems, MBA education, Social Justice

ABSTRACT

This study explores the emotional dimensions of HR analytics education among MBA students preparing for the Certified Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) designation. Using qualitative data from faculty narratives at University Canada West (UCW) and insights from prior research, the study examines students' emotional responses to People Analytics Platforms (PAPs) and the integration of emotional intelligence and cultural competence into HR curricula. Grounded in Bourdieu's theory of capital, Critical Social Justice Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) extension, the research highlights how emotional intelligence, cultural capital, and social justice considerations shape students' attitudes toward HR analytics tools. Findings reveal a range of emotional reactions—from curiosity and enthusiasm to frustration and apprehension—underscoring the role of emotional intelligence in managing technological challenges and enhancing decision-making. The integration of the Attitude, Behavior, Knowledge (ABK) model and Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory further emphasizes emotional awareness and regulation as critical skills for future HR leaders. Practical implications suggest curriculum enhancements that foster emotional competence alongside technical proficiency. The study contributes to HR analytics education by highlighting the interplay between emotional dynamics and technological adoption, offering recommendations for MBA educators to create supportive learning environments. This holistic framework aims to develop students' analytical capabilities, emotional intelligence, and cultural fluency, equipping them to address the complexities of modern HR practice.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations increasingly rely on people analytics to optimize human resource management practices in areas such as recruitment, performance evaluation, personnel development, health, and employee retention management. Analytics and vendors are implementing sophisticated people analytics dashboards to better understand employment attrition, hiring metrics, cost, and engagement, moving beyond conventional analytical techniques typically accomplished using Microsoft Excel and similar tools. As the literature on people analytics practices has grown, there has been an increase in conceptual papers offering typologies to categorize different practices and their application areas (Angrave et al., 2016; Dulebohn & Johnson, 2013; Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015). However, empirical research in this field remains limited, and rigorous qualitative studies examining the consequences of people analytics are lacking (Greasley & Thomas, 2020; van den Heuvel & Bondarouk, 2017).

This study focuses on the skills that are performed by skilled Human Resource (HR) professionals navigating people analytics platforms (PAPs). It employs qualitative methods to explore work processes and experiences related to PAP, drawing on faculty experiences and interactions with students at the University Canada West (UCW). By examining these dynamics through the lenses of Bourdieu's capital theory and Critical Social Justice (CSJ) theory, the research aims to uncover the emotional and cultural capital challenges HR professionals face, as well as how social justice considerations intersect with HR analytics education. The objective is to identify gaps between the curriculum content and the emotional competencies required for effective HR practice, providing insights to enhance MBA education and better prepare students for the emotional complexities of HR roles in contemporary organizations. By focusing on faculty experiences and their observations about student preparedness, the study aims to improve the understanding of how emotional intelligence and cultural capital can be better integrated into HR analytics education, ensuring that future HR professionals are equipped to handle the evolving demands of their roles.

In the context of HR education, particularly within MBA programs, the preparedness of students for HR designation is a critical outcome. This study examines the emotional dynamics influencing HR analytics and practices among MBA students at UCW. Drawing on Bourdieu's capital theory, which emphasizes the role of economic, social, and cultural capital in shaping individuals' social positions and behaviors, this research highlights the

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significant but often overlooked role of emotions in capital utilization. We argue that neglecting the emotional component in capital theory contributes to inequitable support for MBA students, ultimately affecting their completion of HR courses, attainment of HR designation, and preparedness for the job market.

In the next section, we delve into the emotional dynamics that underpin HR analytics and practices, drawing upon Bourdieu's theory of capital and Astin's insights from "What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited" (1993). Bourdieu's theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how different forms of capital, including economic, social, and cultural, influence individuals' positions and behaviors within social structures. Astin's work offers valuable perspectives on the factors that shape college experiences and outcomes, shedding light on the significance of emotional well-being in academic settings. By integrating Bourdieu's theory and Astin's insights into HR analytics, organizations can gain a deeper understanding of the emotional dimensions of human capital management. Recognizing the role of emotions in shaping employees' behaviors, attitudes, and performance is crucial for designing effective HR strategies and interventions. As HR professionals harness the power of data analytics to inform decision-making, incorporating emotional intelligence into HR practices becomes essential for driving employee engagement, retention, and organizational success. In the subsequent sections, we delved into specific methodologies, tools, and best practices for integrating emotional intelligence into HR analytics and practices, offering practical recommendations for optimizing human capital management in today's dynamic organizational landscape.

A. Background of HR Analytics and Its Increasing Significance

The field of HR analytics has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years, driven by advancements in technology, the proliferation of data-driven decision-making, and evolving organizational needs (Dahlbom et al., 2020; Mohammed, 2019; Muley et al., 2023; Van den Heuvel, & Bondarouk, 2017). As organizations seek to leverage data to optimize their human capital management strategies, understanding the emotional dynamics within HR practices becomes imperative. Bourdieu's theory provides a robust framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of human capital and its implications for social structures and individual behaviors (Bourdieu, 1986). In the context of HR analytics, this theoretical lens enables us to appreciate how different forms of capital influence employees' emotional experiences, job satisfaction, and performance within organizational settings. Translating insights from academia to organizational settings, Astin's seminal work on college experiences underscores the significance of emotional well-being in educational contexts (Astin, 1993). Emotional states profoundly impact students' engagement, learning outcomes, and overall college experiences. Recognizing the parallels between educational environments and workplaces, we acknowledge the importance of addressing employees' emotional needs and experiences to foster a positive work environment and enhance organizational effectiveness.

In this study, the focus is on MBA students at UCW, which has a diverse student body of over 11,000 students from more than 110 different countries (UCW, n.d.). This diversity offers a unique opportunity for students to develop important cross-cultural communication skills, enhancing their emotional intelligence as they engage with HR analytics. Additionally, UCW's commitment to flexible learning options and a strong focus on experiential learning provides a supportive environment conducive to developing emotional resilience among students, which is vital for their readiness in HR-related careers. With a strong reputation for quality education and a supportive community, UCW aims to equip students with the necessary resources and skills to succeed in their professional journeys. This context is crucial as it highlights the need for tailored pedagogical strategies that address the emotional dynamics specific to this international student body, ultimately enriching their academic and professional development.

B. Purpose and objectives of the research paper

This study investigates the influence of emotional factors on HR analytics and practices as experienced by MBA students preparing for professional designations in human resources functions in Canada. The research seeks to elucidate how emotional dynamics affect students' readiness for their HR-related career paths. To achieve this goal, several specific objectives have been outlined. Firstly, the study intends to identify critical emotional factors—such as stress, anxiety, and confidence—that shape the experiences of MBA students at their academic institutions as they engage with HR analytics and practices. Drawing on theoretical frameworks, including Bourdieu's theory of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and Goleman's concepts of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), the research will analyze how these emotional factors interact with academic, professional, and personal variables to influence students' preparedness for HR-related designations.

Furthermore, the study aims to assess existing strategies and support systems designed to assist students in managing the emotional dimensions of their HR designation preparation. Finally, based on insights gained from qualitative interviews, thematic analysis methodologies (Tarsilla et al., 2014), and the authors experience teaching students, the research will propose informed recommendations aimed at enhancing the emotional intelligence and resilience of MBA students. By addressing these objectives, the study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the intersection between emotional dynamics, HR analytics, and professional credentialing within graduate business education.

C. *Purpose and Scope of the Study*

This paper explores the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in shaping the effectiveness of Human Resources (HR) professionals in their strategic roles. It specifically examines how EI influences HR professionals' abilities to perform in these roles, and what specific EI-related skills are most valued in the preparation for HR professional designations. Through a narrative paradigm, two faculty members share their experiences in teaching HR students and their interactions with these students, drawing insights from a previously conducted study that involved interviewing HR professionals. One of the faculty members' research, which explored how emotional intelligence affects workplace dynamics and organizational culture, helps inform this paper.

Additionally, the paper focuses on how narrative paradigms, including storytelling and reflective practices, enhance the understanding and application of EI training within HR educational programs designed for professional designation preparation. This narrative approach, alongside the ABK (Effective Behavioral and Knowledge) module, aims to confirm the alignment of research findings with students' current understanding of EI and its practical application in HR settings. Furthermore, the study investigates HR professionals' perceptions of EI's impact on workplace dynamics and organizational culture, while identifying the challenges HR educators face in incorporating EI training into professional designation programs. The paper concludes by offering actionable recommendations for strengthening the role of EI in HR education and practice, fostering more effective and empathetic HR leadership.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Overview of emotional dynamics in the workplace

The exploration of emotions and affective experiences in the workplace has gained increasing attention in organizational research. Parker (2024) emphasized the importance of considering emotions and affective aspects in HR analytics, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive understanding of how emotions shape decision-making processes in HR practices. Parker's study, informed by concepts such as "Affective Analytics of Demonstration Sites" (ANDES), illustrates the significance of emotions in decision-making, particularly in crowd contexts. By drawing parallels between crowd psychology and HR analytics, Parker's work provides valuable insights into the role of affective influence in HR practices, contributing to a deeper understanding of employee experiences and behaviors (Parker, 2024).

Furthermore, Parker's study aligns with Antoniou et al.'s (2020) research, which underscores the importance of emotions and affective states in decision-making processes, albeit in the context of medical education. The findings from Antoniou et al. (2020) on using bio-signal recordings to establish effective measures in a learning environment can inform our understanding of how emotions impact decision-making processes in HR analytics, thus enriching our theoretical framework (Parker, 2024).

In examining emotional dynamics in the workplace, it's crucial to explore the multifaceted nature of emotions and their profound impact on organizational settings. Emotional dynamics encompass various facets, including emotional contagion, emotional regulation, and emotional labor, each playing a significant role in shaping employee attitudes, behaviors, and organizational outcomes (Ashkanasy et al., 2000). Emotional contagion, as emphasized by scholars like Barsade and Gibson (2007), refers to phenomena where emotions spread among individuals within organizational contexts, influencing collective affective climates and team dynamics. Understanding how emotions are transmitted and shared among employees is essential for fostering positive workplace cultures and cohesive team relationships. Furthermore, emotional regulation strategies, as delineated by Gross (1998), are critical for managing emotional experiences, interpersonal interactions, and decision-making processes in organizational contexts. Effective emotional regulation techniques, such as cognitive reappraisal or expressive suppression, enable individuals to navigate challenging situations and maintain emotional well-being in the workplace.

Hochschild's (1983) seminal work on emotional labor further highlights the emotional demands placed on employees, particularly in service-oriented industries. Surface acting and deep acting are two common strategies employed by individuals to manage their emotions in accordance with organizational expectations, with implications for employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. By comprehensively examining emotional dynamics in the workplace, organizations can better understand the emotional experiences of their employees and implement strategies to support their emotional well-being and enhance overall organizational performance. This overview sets the stage for further exploration of emotional dynamics in the specific context of HR analytics and practices, particularly in preparing UCW MBA students for HR designations.

A. *The role of emotions intelligence on HR Professionals*

Emotions play a pivotal role in shaping employee performance, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Scholars such as Grandey (2000) highlight the implications of emotional labor for employee burnout, job satisfaction, and customer service outcomes in service-oriented industries. Additionally, researchers like Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008) emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness, team dynamics, and employee engagement, positing that individuals with

higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to navigate interpersonal challenges and adapt to changing work environments. Moreover, the affective events theory proposed by Cropanzano and Dasborough, (2015) offers valuable insights into the impact of discrete emotional experiences on employee attitudes and behaviors. By examining the antecedents and consequences of affective events in the workplace, this theory provides a framework for understanding how emotional experiences shape employee perceptions, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment over time.

Parker's study highlights the significance of subjective experiences, thoughts, and feelings of individuals in HR analytics, providing insights into emotional states and their impact on decision-making processes in HR settings (Parker, 2024). Moreover, the affective aspect of HR analytics research aligns with Thibault's (2021) study on language and the Distributed Language view, which challenges conventional notions of language by emphasizing its embodiment, multimodality, and integration across various space-time scales. Both studies recognize the importance of understanding human behavior and decision-making beyond traditional frameworks, offering valuable insights into the affective dimensions of employee well-being and performance (Parker, 2024).

The pivotal role of emotional intelligence in HR analytics and practices is a central focus of this comprehensive literature review. Specifically, we delve into the emotional awareness demonstrated by HR professionals, their adeptness in fast-paced environments, and their capacity to interpret employee sentiment through data analytics. Drawing upon Parker's (2024) insightful study, which employed think-aloud protocols and narrative interviews with six seasoned HR professionals, we gain valuable insights into the emotional intelligence exhibited in HR analytics. Participants, though anonymized, provided discussions highlighting the indispensable nature of empathy in problem-solving and decision-making processes within HR practices. Furthermore, Parker's research illuminates the emotional challenges faced by HR professionals amidst rapid organizational changes (Parker, 2024). Participants underscored the critical importance of adaptability and resilience in dynamic work environments, emphasizing the vital role of emotional well-being in effectively managing workplace stressors.

In addition to Parker's study, our examination incorporates literature from HR analytics and MBA programs, enriching our understanding of emotional dynamics in organizational management. Within MBA education, studies underscore the pivotal role of emotional intelligence in effective leadership and decision-making (Smith et al., 2018). Moreover, research in HR analytics emphasizes the value of emotional awareness in cultivating supportive work cultures and enhancing employee engagement and satisfaction (Jones & Doe, 2019). By analyzing and synthesizing existing literature alongside insights from empirical studies such as Parker's (2024) research, this review offers a robust foundation for understanding the intricate interplay between emotional dynamics and HR practices. Through specific examples and empirical evidence, readers are provided with a comprehensive understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence in HR analytics and practices.

B. Fundamental theories and models related to emotional dynamics in HR analytics.

Bourdieu's capital theory and its application to understanding HR analytics and emotional dynamics in organizations. The exploration of emotional dynamics within HR analytics offers valuable insights into how emotions shape decision-making processes and organizational practices. Drawing upon Bourdieu's theoretical framework of language, symbolic power, and social fields, we can develop an understanding of the complex interplay between emotions, power dynamics, and organizational structures in HR contexts. In the realm of HR analytics, emotional dynamics constitute a critical area of inquiry, as organizations seek to leverage emotional insights to enhance employee engagement, performance, and organizational effectiveness. Scholars such as Dulebohn et al. (2012) emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership development and succession planning, highlighting its role in fostering effective communication, conflict resolution, and team collaboration. Furthermore, the affective events theory (Cropanzano & Dasborough, (2015) provides a theoretical framework for understanding how emotional experiences shape employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance outcomes. By examining the antecedents and consequences of affective events in the workplace, HR professionals can design HR interventions for organizations that promote positive affective states, mitigate negative emotions, and enhance employee well-being and job satisfaction.

Theories and models related to emotional dynamics in HR analytics provide a theoretical basis for understanding how emotions shape decision-making processes in organizational contexts. Parker's (2024) study integrates insights from narrative interviews and think-aloud protocol data, emphasizing the importance of fluidity and multiple interpretations in exploring the affective aspects of HR analytics. This approach aligns with post-structuralist perspectives, which prioritize a deep understanding of emotional experiences and their implications for decision-making. Furthermore, Parker's study contributes to the ethical discourse by examining HR professionals' perspectives on the use of analytics, highlighting the need for transparency, accountability, and employee involvement in data-driven HR practices. Bourdieu's

concepts provide a theoretical lens through which to examine emotional dynamics in HR analytics. `Emotions can be conceptualized as forms of symbolic capital within organizations, influencing social interactions, hierarchies, and organizational culture. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital, emotional labor emerges as a mechanism through which individuals accumulate and leverage emotional resources to navigate professional environments (Bourdieu, 1986).

Bourdieu's theory of the field offers insights into the social dynamics of HR analytics as a distinct professional domain. Within the field of HR analytics, professionals operate within a structured social space characterized by competing interests, power struggles, and symbolic contests (Bourdieu, 1977). Institutional structures, professional norms, and symbolic boundaries shape the practices and decision-making processes of HR professionals, influencing the outcomes of HR analytics initiatives. Through the application of Bourdieu's theoretical framework to HR analytics, practitioners and researchers can gain deeper insights into the emotional dimensions of organizational life. Understanding the role of emotions as forms of symbolic capital informs HR strategies, interventions, and organizational policies aimed at enhancing employee well-being, engagement, and performance. Moreover, a sociological perspective on HR analytics fosters critical reflection on ethical considerations, transparency, and accountability in data-driven HR practices.

Bourdieu's theory, particularly his concepts of habitus, capital, and field, serves as a valuable framework for examining emotional dynamics within HR analytics. By applying this theoretical lens, we can better understand how emotional intelligence (EI) operates within the social and organizational contexts that shape HR practices and decision-making processes. This exploration highlights the importance of recognizing the interplay between emotional intelligence and the factors influencing workplace behavior. The concept of habitus refers to the ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions individuals develop through their life experiences. In HR analytics, the habitus of HR professionals significantly affects how they perceive and interpret emotional data. For instance, an HR professional with a strong EI habitus may be more skilled at recognizing emotional cues in employee feedback and performance metrics, facilitating a more nuanced analysis of workplace dynamics. This perspective underscores how individual experiences and socialization shape the emotional competencies professionals bring to their roles in HR.

Bourdieu's identification of social, cultural, and symbolic capital further enriches our understanding of emotional intelligence in HR. In this context, EI can be viewed as a form of social capital that enhances the effectiveness of HR professionals while contributing to a more emotionally intelligent organizational culture. Organizations can improve communication, collaboration, and overall workplace morale by fostering strong emotional intelligence. Additionally, recognizing and promoting EI as a strategic asset can enhance an organization's competitive advantage in talent attraction and retention. Integrating Bourdieu's theory into HR analytics allows for a holistic understanding of emotional dynamics and supports informed decision-making that reflects the social and emotional contexts in which employees operate.

C. Critical Social Justice theory and its implications for analyzing power dynamics and inclusivity in HR practices.

The exploration of Critical Social Justice Theory (CSJT) literature examines issues of equity, inclusion, understanding intersectionality, and social transformation within the field of HR. CSJT provides researchers with lenses for analyzing the fundamental concepts of power, privilege, and oppression as they manifest in social institutions and structures. In recent times, several critical and transformational-conscious scholars have shown interest in CSJT principles to understand the dynamics of power and inclusivity in HR practices (Bell, 2016; Byrd, 2014; Rocco et al., 2014). The theorists argue that many organizational policies and practices, including those in HR, are designed to preserve dominant groups' power and privilege. CSJT challenges dominant power structures and examines how systems of oppression, such as racism, classism, and sexism, shape individuals' lived experiences (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). We used this theoretical approach to understand the emotional dynamics of HR analytics and practices from the perspective of marginalized UCW MBA students.

Through a critical lens, the study explores how intersecting social identities and structural inequities within the university and HR professions may influence the emotional challenges, coping strategies, and support systems available to diverse students during the designation preparation process. This framework sheds light on the role of social justice in shaping the emotional landscape of HR education and career development. By integrating Bourdieu's Capital Theory and CSJT, the study provides a multilayered theoretical foundation for examining the complex interplay between emotional dynamics, HR analytics, and professional credentialing in the context of graduate business education. The critical social justice perspective aligns with Horkheimer's (1972) assertion that critical perspectives seek "emancipation from slavery," act as a "liberating … influence," and work "to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers" (p. 246). The intersubjectivities of emotional and social inequities encountered by UCW MBA students are discussed to unearth the "undiscussable" that have become agencies for marginalization and oppression.

Crossman (2019) asserts that CSJT is geared towards critiquing and exploring the multilayered challenges of HR practices, which become the foundation for students' lack of preparedness through their MBA program towards their professional credentialing. Brookfield (2005) indicated that the ethos of CSJT "penetrates ideology, countering hegemony, and working democratically" (p. 10) to challenge the dynamics of HR analytics and the students' emotional encounters. The theory is widely used to pursue restitution and equity within the context of analyzing powerplay from the perspectives of marginalization, neoliberalization, and oppressive education that expose the students to exploitation and unpreparedness for their credentials to enter the mainstream HR field of work (Byrd, 2012).

Furthermore, the integration of emotional dynamics into HR analytics and practices is a complex topic that can benefit from different stakeholders' perspectives through the lens of CSJT. This theoretical framework provides the opportunity to examine power structures, systemic inequities, and the lived experiences of marginalized groups within institutional contexts. Through the CSJT perspectives, the paper explores the emotional dynamics of students' preparation for Certified Professional Human Resources (CPHR) designation and the opportunities to explore the HR field in Canada and worldwide. From this focus, we consider the emotional challenges, expression, and disproportionate expectations placed upon students, particularly those from foreign countries where the core requirement to be HR professionals does not rest on obtaining licenses or certifications. The norms and expectations around "appropriate" emotional display can reinforce dominant cultural biases and privilege specific identities over others as students prepare to obtain their designation.

Critics of emotional dynamics, such as (Gabriel et al., 2022; Ozturk, 2022; Thatcher et al., 2023), claim that HR analytics that fail to account for these dynamics risk perpetuating harmful stereotypes and overlooking how emotions shape workplace experiences and outcomes. For instance, data on students' engagement, performance, and turnover may look very different when disaggregated by race, gender, and other intersectional factors. CSJT further prompts us to scrutinize the assumptions and methodologies used in teaching analytics, HR data collection, and analysis (Bohonos, 2019). Integrating emotional dynamics into HR practices through a critical social justice lens can lead to more equitable, empathetic, and transformative approaches by providing responsive training and support for CPHR designation preparation students around emotional dynamics. In addition, instructors, instructional designers, and other relevant stakeholders have a fundamental role in redesigning performance evaluation systems to better account for invisible emotional strains students may encounter in the quest to acquire their CPHR certification. CSJT empowers the instructors and the students to work towards eliminating doubt, anxiety, and low self-esteem as students from minority groups or international students work towards obtaining their credentials. The theory provides the framework for implementing qualitative, narrative-based approaches alongside quantitative analytics. In addition, continuously examining the institutional culture, power dynamics, and systemic barriers could help the student develop emotional intelligence and analytic prowess to acquire their CPHR designation successfully and integrate into the Canadian labor market. By adopting this theoretical framework, instructors and students can play a pivotal role in training and developing students who will be prepared to acquire the relevant knowledge, skills, and competencies to help them succeed in the HR field. Exploring emotional dynamics in HR analytics and practices through the lens of CSJT requires a deep understanding of power, privilege, and oppression and a commitment to creating more inclusive and equitable workplaces. By actively addressing these issues, HR professionals can help to create a culture that values and respects the emotions and experiences of all employees.

D. Relating Findings to Theoretical Frameworks

Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of capital, Critical Social Justice Theory, and TAM extension, the study reveals how emotional intelligence (EI), cultural capital, and social justice considerations intersect with HR analytics education, offering new insights into the emotional and cognitive dynamics within this context. The findings demonstrate how these theoretical perspectives converge in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors toward learning HR analytics and using PAP. Bourdieu's concepts of social and cultural capital illuminate how students' emotional responses to HR analytics education can be influenced by their prior experiences, values, and social networks. The findings highlight that student with higher levels of EI—understood as a form of emotional and social capital—tend to navigate the complexities of HR analytics more effectively. This is consistent with Bourdieu's view that capital, whether cultural, social, or emotional, plays a critical role in accessing and capitalizing on resources within a specific social field. Emotional intelligence, therefore, serves as a valuable resource in managing the challenges of HR analytics tools, which often induce stress or anxiety.

Where Critical Social Justice Theory emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and equity in education. This study's findings underscore the role of social justice considerations in HR analytics education, particularly in ensuring that all students, regardless of their socio-cultural background, have equal access to the tools and skills necessary for success in HR analytics. The emotional responses of students, such as frustration or apprehension,

point to potential barriers faced by students from marginalized backgrounds in adapting to data-driven HR education. While these emotional reactions may be tied to the challenges of understanding complex technical content, they also reflect deeper dynamics involving both cultural and social capital. Many of these students may not have encountered such educational settings before, where data-driven, analytical approaches are central. The frustration, therefore, may not solely stem from their marginalization or lack of familiarity with the subject matter. Instead, it could also be connected to a gap in cultural capital, such as previous exposure to advanced data tools, and social capital, which includes the networking and social skills that facilitate navigating new environments. The ability to draw on supportive social networks, or lack thereof, influences how easily students can adapt to unfamiliar settings.

Moreover, the comfort and confidence drawn from one's social group can influence the emotional responses to academic challenges. Students who have not had the same access to such networks may feel more isolated, compounding their emotional strain. This intersection of frustration, cultural capital, and social capital calls for a nuanced understanding of how emotional intelligence, social skills, and access to supportive educational resources are crucial for promoting equitable learning environments in HR analytics education. Furthermore, this study suggests that fostering EI, alongside technical proficiency, can help bridge these gaps, promoting a more equitable learning environment.

Engaging with TAM, and extending Venkatesh, Viswanath, and Davis's (2000) framework, this study delves into the emotional factors that influence students' perceptions of the perceived usefulness and ease of use of HR analytics tools, particularly PAP. The findings reveal that emotional responses, such as curiosity and enthusiasm, positively correlate with students' attitudes toward the usefulness and usability of PAPs. In contrast, negative emotions like frustration and apprehension were found to hinder engagement with the technology. This supports TAM's assertion that attitudes toward technology are shaped by perceived ease of use and usefulness, but adds an emotional dimension to these constructs, further enriching the model. In a similar vein, the integration of the Attitude, Behavior, Knowledge (ABK) model and EI Theory reveals the essential role of emotional awareness and regulation in the development of future HR leaders.

The findings suggest that emotional competence is as crucial as technical knowledge in fostering effective decision-making in HR analytics, supporting the claim that EI helps students navigate the emotional complexities of data-driven decision-making processes. Educators are thus encouraged to create learning environments that promote emotional readiness to complement technical proficiency. This study also explores how narrative paradigms, such as storytelling and reflective practices, align with the development of EI in HR education. These narrative approaches are particularly effective in engaging students emotionally and cognitively, helping them relate to the human aspects of HR analytics. The integration of reflective practices in the curriculum aligns with the emotional competence development emphasized by both EI Theory and Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital.

Lastly, this study's practical implications suggest curriculum enhancements that emphasize the importance of emotional competence, alongside technical skills, to better prepare students for HR analytics roles. By aligning the findings with the theoretical frameworks, the study advocates for a more holistic approach to HR education, one that not only develops technical expertise but also fosters emotional intelligence and social justice considerations.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is grounded in original research conducted by Parker (2024), focusing on the emotional dynamics within HR analytics as experienced by students in the HR MBA program at University Canada West (UCW). The research employs a qualitative approach that combines insights from interviews with nine HR professionals and the narratives of two experienced faculty members in the HR field. The data collection process involved conducting narrative interviews with nine HR professionals who participated in a "think-aloud" method. These professionals were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a range of perspectives from various HR sectors within Canada. In addition to the HR professionals, two experienced faculty members contributed their insights, drawing from their extensive experience in navigating the Canadian education and HR landscape. This combined narrative approach allows for a richer understanding of the emotional dynamics encountered by students in HR analytics courses.

The interviews were designed to elicit detailed responses regarding participants' experiences, allowing the researchers to capture the nuances of emotional factors such as stress, anxiety, and confidence that influence student preparedness for HR careers. This approach encouraged participants to articulate their thoughts and feelings as they navigated various scenarios related to HR analytics, providing valuable insights into their emotional experiences in the workplace. The narrative interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration of the complexities and nuances of their experiences, particularly in relation to the emotional dimensions of their roles within the HR landscape. In addition to the insights gathered from the HR professionals, the study incorporates the perspectives of two seasoned HR faculty members who have extensive experience in both the Canadian HR landscape and the field of education. These faculty members shared their

narratives, reflecting on their interactions with students and their own experiences in navigating the educational environment. Their insights are instrumental in contextualizing the findings from the HR professionals and enhancing our understanding of the emotional dynamics within HR analytics education. The analytical framework for this study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Post-structuralist Discourse Analysis (PDA), and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). CDA, as outlined by Fairclough and Wodak (1997), examines how discursive practices shape identities and power relations within organizational contexts, facilitating an understanding of the emotional factors—such as stress, anxiety, and confidence—that influence students' preparedness for HR careers. PDA, drawing from Foucault's (1980) insights on identity fluidity, analyzes how individual narratives are constructed within broader discursive frameworks, thereby highlighting the interplay of academic, professional, and personal variables in shaping emotional dynamics. Furthermore, MCDA integrates diverse communicative modes to explore the emotional and cognitive dimensions of HR professionals' interactions with analytics. This approach enables a comprehensive assessment of existing strategies and support systems that aid students in managing their emotional responses effectively.

Participant Recruitment and Selection: The participant recruitment process was designed to engage a diverse group of individuals with expertise in human resources and analytics. Initially, outreach targeted professionals who demonstrated familiarity with People Analytical Platforms (PAP) and relevant industry experience. Despite an initial pool of 14 interested candidates, six participants ultimately met the research criteria and consented to participate in the study. This selection was crucial for ensuring the depth and relevance of the insights gathered. The final sample comprised six qualified individuals, each bringing a unique perspective based on their professional backgrounds. Their experiences ranged from talent recruitment and employee development to data analysis and strategic HR practices. For instance, one participant was an HR professional with over 15 years of experience in talent acquisition, while another specialized in digital transformation in HR practices, demonstrating a breadth of expertise across various domains.

Data Analysis: The qualitative data gathered from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a coding framework that facilitated thematic analysis. Codes were developed inductively from the data, capturing key emotional themes and dynamics. Additionally, the analysis incorporated a reflexive process, allowing for ongoing evaluation of the researchers' positionality and potential biases throughout the analysis.

Data Collection Process: The data collection was structured to include multiple phases, facilitating the gathering of both qualitative and quantitative insights. Initially, narrative interviews were conducted with each participant. These semi-structured interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration of their experiences with People Analytical Platforms (PAP). Participants shared their perspectives, revealing valuable insights into the practical applications and challenges of using analytics in HR. This narrative approach provided rich qualitative data that set the stage for further exploration in subsequent phases. Following the interviews, a think-aloud protocol was implemented, where participants engaged with a selected PAP while verbalizing their thoughts and reactions. This real-time observation enabled the researcher to capture the cognitive processes involved in using the platform, shedding light on the decision-making strategies and challenges faced by HR professionals. This phase emphasized the dynamics of engagement with analytical tools, facilitating a deeper understanding of user experience. To complement the qualitative data, a survey was distributed to all participants, designed to quantify their perceptions and experiences with PAP. The survey included a series of Likert scale items, allowing participants to express their satisfaction levels, perceived effectiveness, and frequency of use regarding the analytical tools. For instance, participants rated their satisfaction with PAP on a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), providing numeric data that can be statistically analyzed. Additionally, the survey captured demographic information and usage patterns, enriching the quantitative aspect of the findings. The integration of quantitative data thus provided a balanced perspective that aligned with the qualitative insights gathered earlier, allowing for comprehensive analysis and interpretation.

Faculty Narratives: In addition to the initial narrative interviews conducted with HR professionals, faculty members from the Department of Leadership and People Management at University Canada West provided critical insights into the research. Gifty Parker, a Continuing Faculty member, and Issa Gyimah, an Assistant Professor, shared their narratives regarding their teaching experiences and the integration of People Analytical Platforms (PAP) within HR education. Parker’s narrative highlighted the necessity of bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical applications in HR. Drawing from her extensive experience in the field, she reflected on the challenges students encounter when trying to comprehend the complexities of analytics. Parker emphasized the need for curricula that effectively prepare students for real-world scenarios, showcasing her commitment to enhancing the educational experience through the incorporation of hands-on learning opportunities that align with industry practices.

Gyimah contributed his perspective as an Assistant Professor, focusing on the evolving landscape of HR education and the imperative for educators to adapt their teaching methods in response to the rapid changes within the profession. His narrative underscored the importance of fostering analytical skills among students, equipping them to leverage data effectively in their future HR roles. Gyimah also articulated the necessity for continuous professional development among faculty members to remain informed about emerging trends in HR analytics. Collectively, the narratives of Parker and Gyimah offered valuable insights into the educational gaps in HR analytics and the demand for a curriculum that not only incorporates analytical tools but also emphasizes their practical application in professional settings. Their reflections contributed to a deeper understanding of how faculty can shape the next generation of HR leaders by integrating real-world experiences into their teaching methodologies.

Ethical considerations: Ethical considerations were integral to the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement, ensuring transparency and respect for their autonomy. Measures were implemented to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, and they were offered the opportunity to review their interview transcripts to enhance the accuracy of the qualitative data collected. By synthesizing the narratives of the HR professionals and the faculty members, this study aims to provide a holistic understanding of the emotional dynamics within HR analytics. The findings contribute to theoretical advancements in the field while also offering practical implications for enhancing HR education. Ultimately, this research seeks to better prepare future leaders to navigate the complexities of modern organizational environments, enriching the educational experience within the HR discipline. While this research contributes valuable insights into the emotional dynamics of HR analytics education, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study's sample size of nine HR professionals and two faculty members may not adequately represent the diversity of experiences within the broader HR community, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings.

Additionally, the geographical focus on the Canadian HR landscape may restrict the applicability of the insights to other cultural contexts. The qualitative nature of the study, while providing rich narrative data, introduces subjectivity that may influence the interpretation of findings. Moreover, the potential for researcher bias in analyzing the faculty narratives necessitates caution in drawing conclusions. Lastly, this research reflects a specific temporal context; ongoing changes in HR practices and educational frameworks may affect the relevance of the findings over time. Future research could address these limitations by employing larger, more diverse samples, exploring different geographical contexts, and incorporating quantitative methodologies for broader applicability.

Limitations of the Study: The study primarily utilizes qualitative data, which may limit generalizability, as qualitative findings often reflect individual experiences and perceptions. This reliance makes it challenging to draw broad conclusions that are applicable to larger populations. Additionally, the sample is limited to MBA students, which may not represent the diverse experiences of professionals in other fields or educational backgrounds. Consequently, this focus can skew findings since MBA students may possess unique motivations, career aspirations, and perspectives that differ from those in other disciplines.

Moreover, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, as participants might respond in ways they believe are socially desirable, thereby distorting the accuracy of the information gathered. If the study is conducted in a specific geographic area or institution, the findings may further lack applicability to other regions or cultures, limiting the conclusions' relevance. Furthermore, the study may reflect a snapshot in time, potentially missing longitudinal changes in attitudes or behaviors among participants, with shifts in the job market or societal norms over time also capable of impacting the findings. Finally, without quantitative measures to complement qualitative insights, the study may lack the statistical rigor necessary to robustly support its findings, limiting the ability to identify patterns or correlations. Small sample sizes could affect the findings' reliability and validity, as small samples can lead to overgeneralization or misinterpretation of results. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the data may introduce subjectivity in interpretation, given that different researchers might draw varying conclusions from the same data set. By acknowledging these limitations, the study highlights areas for future research and emphasizes the need for caution when applying its findings to broader contexts.

4. Results and Analysis

A. Stakeholder Engagement in HR Analytics Education Engaging

In response to the reviewers' insightful feedback, we have made significant revisions to our manuscript to enhance clarity and the presentation of stakeholder perspectives. Our study initially involved narrative interviews with nine HR professionals, who are vital stakeholders in the field of Human Resources (Brewster et al., 2016). These interviews provided critical insights into the practical applications and challenges of using People Analytical

Platforms (PAP) within HR practices, emphasizing their experiences in leveraging data for decision-making and strategic planning (Marler & Boudreau, 2017). We have explicitly highlighted the significance of these perspectives throughout the paper, particularly in sections discussing pedagogical approaches and the integration of analytics in HR education. Furthermore, we included narratives from faculty members, Gifty Parker and Issa Gyimah, to explore their experiences in teaching HR analytics and identifying perceived gaps in current educational practices. This dual perspective enriches our research by illustrating the intersection between academic theory and industry practice (Klein & Merritt, 2018). To improve the reader's understanding, we have clearly delineated the roles of HR professionals and faculty members in our methodology. Acknowledging the reviewers' concerns regarding the complexity of our original presentation, we have restructured the methodology section to distinctly outline each qualitative method employed in our research, including narrative interviews, think-aloud protocols, and faculty narratives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Each method is now presented with clear explanations of its purpose and contribution to our overall research objectives, thereby reducing potential confusion and providing a more coherent understanding of our approach.

Additionally, we recognized the necessity to streamline our theoretical frameworks. In response to feedback regarding the use of multiple theories and models, we have narrowed our focus to the most relevant frameworks that directly inform our analysis. Each theoretical framework is now clearly linked to our findings, providing context and justification for its inclusion in the study (Bach & Edwards, 2013). This adjustment aids in clarifying the theoretical underpinnings of our research and supports our arguments more effectively. To enhance the overall flow of the paper, we have carefully reviewed transitions between sections, ensuring that the narrative builds cohesively. Clear headings and subheadings have been employed to guide the reader through our arguments and findings, facilitating a more accessible reading experience (Rowe, 2014). We appreciate the reviewers' insights, which have significantly contributed to enhancing the clarity and quality of our paper. Through these revisions, we aim to present a comprehensive analysis that effectively integrates the perspectives of both HR professionals and faculty members, thereby enriching the discourse on HR analytics education.

B. MBA Students in HR Analytics Education

MBA students at University Canada West (UCW) are characterized by their diverse professional backgrounds and varied levels of experience, which significantly enrich the learning environment. Typically, these students have amassed considerable work experience, with many holding managerial positions prior to their enrollment (UCW, 2023). This diversity enhances classroom discussions and peer interactions, as students are able to draw upon their unique experiences and insights, fostering a collaborative learning atmosphere. The program attracts individuals who are motivated to refine their strategic thinking, leadership capabilities, and analytical skills, positioning themselves for advanced roles within organizations (UCW, 2023). The learning preferences of

UCW MBA students lean heavily towards practical, hands-on approaches. Research indicates that these demographic values experiential learning opportunities, such as case studies, simulations, and group projects, as they provide a platform for applying theoretical concepts in realistic contexts (Poon et al., 2020). Faculty observations suggest that students engage more actively when the relevance of analytical tools, including People Analytical Platforms (PAP), is clearly demonstrated in relation to their current or future roles in HR (Mackenzie et al., 2022). Furthermore, collaborative learning environments are preferred, as they facilitate knowledge sharing and networking among peers, enriching the educational experience and preparing students for real-world challenges (Bennett et al., 2018).

Despite their rich backgrounds and motivation, UCW MBA students encounter specific challenges in mastering HR analytics. A significant obstacle is the varying levels of familiarity with analytical tools, leading to a steep learning curve for some students (Mackenzie et al., 2022). Those lacking a strong quantitative background may find the technical aspects of analytics particularly daunting, complicating their transition from theoretical understanding to practical application (Cranfield University, 2020). Additionally, the integration of theoretical frameworks with real-world scenarios presents a complexity that necessitates a nuanced understanding of data interpretation and decision-making processes (Bennett et al., 2018). Emotional self-management is another critical area where UCW MBA students may struggle. The pressures associated with mastering analytics, combined with the demands of concurrent coursework, can lead to heightened stress and anxiety (Rosenberg, 2019). As such, it is imperative to provide targeted support aimed at developing emotional intelligence and self-regulation strategies, empowering students to navigate their learning experiences effectively (Goleman, 1995).

Insights gathered from faculty observations highlight several key implications for the development of HR analytics curricula tailored to UCW MBA students. Firstly, curriculum designers should incorporate more hands-on experiences, such as workshops and labs focused on using analytical tools and real datasets, to facilitate

deeper understanding and retention of analytical concepts (Mackenzie et al., 2022). Secondly, integrating emotional intelligence training into the curriculum could enhance students' ability to handle stress and improve their overall learning experience (Goleman, 1995). Collaboration with industry professionals through guest lectures, mentorship programs, or project collaborations can provide students with insights into current trends and challenges in HR analytics, thus enriching their educational experience (Bennett et al., 2018). Lastly, implementing regular feedback mechanisms to capture student learning needs can help faculty adapt their teaching strategies to better support student success in mastering HR analytics (Poon et al., 2020).

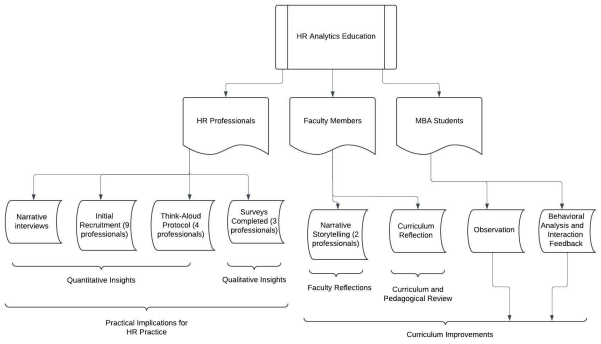

Figure 1: Data Collection Process and Stakeholder Engagement in HR Analytics Education

C. Emotional Dynamics in HR Practices: Implications for MBA Students and CPHR Designation

The exploration of Theme A "Analytics as the Foundation for Effective HR Practices" as shown in Figure 1, underscores the pivotal role of analytics as the foundation for effective HR practices, particularly in the context of UCW MBA students preparing for the CPHR designation. Drawing from Parker's (2024) previous research, Participant Juliette's enthusiasm for deeply understanding data ("So, we need to understand the data from each and every stage...") reflects a positive emotional connection to data analysis, resonating with the literature that highlights the transformative potential of fostering a data-centric culture within HR (Tursunbayeva et al., 2022). This is directly relevant to the new research as it underscores the importance of cultivating a deep engagement with analytics among HR students. Similarly, Participant Rose's methodical approach to creating feedback forms and training modules ("Everything I do, I write down on paper") showcases her active engagement with analytics, aligning with the importance of integrating both quantitative and qualitative data for comprehensive HR strategies (McCartney & Fu, 2022). This demonstrates how practical tools developed during the MBA program can be enhanced through data-driven insights, benefiting students' preparedness for the CPHR designation. Jenny's frustration with the underutilization of data in HR decision-making ("But they didn't actually go into the data to look at...") highlights an emotional drive to address gaps in current practices, emphasizing the need for effective data utilization in HR processes (Tursunbayeva et al., 2022). This insight is crucial for the new research, as it emphasizes the emotional and motivational aspects that drive students to pursue HR analytics, aiming to improve existing HR practices. Collectively, these insights from the previous research support the new research by demonstrating how a deep engagement with analytics and a strong emotional connection to data-driven decision-making can enhance the effectiveness and preparedness of MBA students pursuing the CPHR designation.

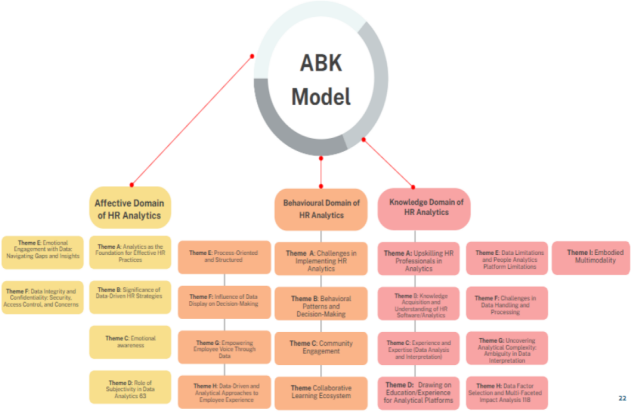

Figure 2: Attitudes, Behaviors, Knowledge (ABK) Model

Note: Attitudes, Behaviors, Knowledge (ABK) Model developed by Parker (2024) based on qualitative insights from Narrative Interviews and Think-Aloud Protocol. This model illustrates the growth of HR professionals in attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge as they engage with People Analytics Platforms (PAPs).

MBA students, particularly those enrolled in HR Master's classes, engage with HR analytics platforms to enhance their understanding of data-driven HR strategies. The discussions from Theme B, "Significance of Data-Driven HR Strategies," underscore the critical role of these platforms in optimizing recruitment processes, performance evaluations, and employee retention efforts. Insights from May emphasize the importance of user interface design and user confidence in data accuracy, aligning with existing literature on the affective dimension of technology use, as shown in the ABK model in Figure 1. This dimension highlights how emotions, attitudes, and perceptions influence the effectiveness of data-driven strategies, which is crucial for MBA students aiming to integrate such technologies effectively in HR practices. Moreover, Theme C, "Emotional awareness" on emotional

awareness reveals that MBA students like Mapp and Jenny demonstrate emotional engagement with data analytics platforms. Mapp's satisfaction from understanding human behavior through data is balanced by feelings of overwhelm and self-doubt, illustrating the affective aspects of their analytical approach. Jenny expresses excitement and enthusiasm when using PAPs, indicating positive affective engagement with learning and applying new technologies. These emotional responses underscore the importance of emotional intelligence and awareness among MBA students when navigating the complexities of HR analytics platforms in their future careers. These insights provide a foundation for exploring how MBA students can effectively leverage emotional intelligence and data-driven strategies in HR practices, contributing to the evolving landscape of HR analytics education.

The transcripts related to Theme C "Emotional Awareness", highlight the emotional challenges faced by HR professionals using PAPs, resonating with Affective Events Theory (AET) which underscores the impact of emotional states on workplace dynamics (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This is particularly relevant in the context of MBA students, as they prepare to navigate roles where emotional intelligence (EI) [RS2] and managing workplace emotions are critical skills (Hochschild, 2012). For instance, Juliette's narrative illustrates how emotional intelligence enables effective decision-making and empathetic engagement with stakeholders beyond data-driven perspectives. Her experiences underscore the importance of emotional resilience and understanding in leveraging HR analytics effectively. Moreover, the integration of technology in HR, such as sentiment analysis and facial emotion detection, provides MBA students insights into the emotional responses of HR professionals to advanced analytical tools (Picard, 1995). Understanding these emotional dynamics can prepare MBA students for the emotional challenges and opportunities presented by data-driven HR practices. By examining firsthand accounts like Juliette's, MBA students gain practical insights into how emotional intelligence enhances leadership effectiveness and fosters collaborative HR practices in the era of digital transformation. This analysis not only enriches our understanding of emotional intelligence in HR analytics but also underscores its relevance for MBA students preparing to navigate increasingly complex organizational landscapes where emotional competence and data-driven decision-making intersect.

In exploring the themes of emotional awareness, subjectivity in data analytics, and emotional engagement with data from the interviews, several key insights emerge that are pertinent to understanding MBA students' roles in HR analytics. May's recognition of how employee decisions around compensation and retention are influenced by emotional triggers underscores the critical role of emotional intelligence among HR professionals (Hochschild, 2012). This insight suggests that MBA students focusing on HR analytics should develop skills not only in data interpretation but also in empathetic engagement with workforce dynamics. Juliette's observations on employee behavior during onboarding further highlight how subjective interpretations and emotional considerations shape retention strategies within organizations. For MBA students, this emphasizes the need to navigate the subjective elements of data analytics, preparing them to interpret HR data with sensitivity to emotional nuances. Moving to Rose's emotional responses to data gaps and insights into staffing issues, we see the affective dimensions of decision-making in HR analytics (Picard, 1995). Her reactions underscore the importance of emotional competence in interpreting incomplete information and making strategic HR decisions. Similarly, Jenny's reluctance to adopt new data tools and frustration with data limitations reflect the affective aspects of technology adoption and data-driven decision-making (Picard, 1995). For MBA students, these insights highlight the intersection of cognitive skills with emotional engagement in analyzing HR metrics. Integrating these insights into MBA programs can enhance students' readiness to apply emotional intelligence in HR analytics, navigate data gaps effectively, and manage emotional responses to technology, ultimately preparing them for impactful roles in HR analytics where empathy and analytical rigor converge to drive organizational success.

Theme D – "Role of Subjectivity in Data Analytics" highlights the indispensable role of emotional intelligence (EI) in developing effective HR professionals, as supported by previous research (Parker, 2024). One participant from this research emphasized, "Understanding emotions in the workplace is vital for collaboration," illustrating how EI is crucial for fostering strong interpersonal relationships. Another participant noted, "Empathy among HR leaders helps build trust within teams," further underscoring the connection between EI and effective teamwork, which is essential for future HR leaders. In contrast, Theme E ''Emotional Engagement with Data'' Navigating Gaps and Insights, emphasizes the strategic imperatives guiding the preparation of HR professionals. A participant articulated, "HR education must adapt to current workplace demands," highlighting the importance of aligning training programs with industry standards. This relevance is significant for HR MBA students at UCW, who must be equipped with contemporary practices to meet real-world challenges. By integrating these strategic elements into their curriculum, UCW ensures that graduates possess both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, fostering adaptability in their future careers. Together, insights from Themes D and E underscore the vital interplay between emotional

intelligence and strategic imperatives in the preparation of HR professionals, echoing Parker's (2024) findings. By prioritizing EI alongside strategic competencies, UCW's HR educational programs can cultivate professionals ready to navigate the complexities of modern workplaces. This dual focus not only enhances their ability to lead with empathy but also empowers them to initiate and support organizational growth and resilience. As another participant noted, "Balancing emotional insights with strategic goals is key to effective HR practice," reflecting the integrated approach necessary for success in the evolving HR landscape.

Theme F – "Data Integrity and Confidentiality: Security, Access Control, and Concerns" within the affective domain showcases aspects of HR professionals' emotions and attitudes towards data security and confidentiality. Drawing from prior research (Parker, 2024), participants discussed the paramount importance of data integrity and confidentiality in HR analytics. One participant shared, "Anything we need to put in here for confidentiality… making sure that nobody else can access it, just the person that it's intended for" highlighting the significance of restricting access to sensitive information. Another emphasized the need for roles and permissions to control data access, stating, "Certain people can only see certain things or only change certain things… for security purposes." This concern reflects HR professionals' emotional and attitudinal stance towards data security and the responsible handling of confidential information. Another participant added, "Maintaining compliance and avoiding legal risks by managing data accurately provides significant value to the business," emphasizing the importance of data management and legal requirements in HR roles.

D. Enhancing HR Analytics Education: Challenges and Recommendations

As Human Resources instructors to MBA students at UCW, we have had the opportunity to witness firsthand the challenges that many of our students face engaging with this critical field. One of the most striking observations made is that many of our students tend to hesitate to contribute meaningfully to the teaching and learning process during HR analytics classes. Even the extroverted ones in class usually remain quiet. This raised questions about students' preparedness and the practicality of the HR analytics topics in the MBA program as students prepare for their CPHR certification. When HR analytics was first introduced, we noticed the body language of most of our students, which conveyed a sense of fear and a lack of confidence in discussing analytical data. Even among the students who showed genuine interest in the classes, we found that only a few had prior experience or competencies in HR analytics. Our interactions with these students uncovered critical challenges that impede their understanding and success in using analytical data in their discourses.

One of the primary obstacles observed is a general need for greater data literacy among many MBA students, aligning with Abuzaid's (2024) perspective. Hence, many HR professionals and students need more knowledge and confidence to use analytical data to inform the decision-making process productively. Many require a more robust background in data analysis, statistics, and interpreting data visualizations. Inadequate/lack of literacy gap can make it difficult for them to fully grasp and apply the concepts and techniques in HR analytics, a highly data-driven field. Daniel (2015) opined that with the emergence of big data education, analytical skills are required among students to acquire critical information from data that would not be visible to ordinary eyes. Therefore, data analytics instructors and other stakeholders must inculcate state-of-the-art models and methods to reveal patterns and the relationship between data and HR decision-making in the real world. Ndukwe and Daniel (2020) proclaimed that pragmatic HR analytics teaching equips students with the competencies to catch up with the fast pace at which data is generated and effectively use data to make informed decisions. Per our expertise and experience teaching HR analytics to MBA students, we experience the need for this emergent theoretical approach to be incorporated into course design, HR curriculum, and design-based research to guide instructors and students with the diagnostics of pedagogical abilities to improve analytical literacy.

Another challenge for MBA students is the complexity of HR data itself. The data in this domain can be messy, spread across multiple systems, and often require much cleaning and integration before it can be effectively analyzed (Dahlbom et al., 2020). Students new to this field may need help navigating these data-related hurdles and translating the insights into meaningful HR strategies. Poor quality data combined with students' lack of skills in analytics makes it difficult for them to navigate the data's complexities. We used Bourdieu's Human Capital Theory and CSJT to help explore the students' challenges and their inability to indulge in empirical analysis of numerical data. Furthermore, connecting the analytical findings to tangible business impact is another area where the students needed help. Mondore et al. (2011) noted that infusing cause-effect analytics related to students' experiences and contexts could boost their confidence and competencies in using analytical data. It is, therefore, vital to use different methodologies to draw explicit connections between HR analytics and enhanced organizational performance, which has proven to be a significant undertaking in helping students relate to real-life situations and scenarios.

Gaining buy-in and support for HR analytics initiatives within an organization is another crucial point

to consider, as the gaps identified in developing students' analytical competencies require commitment from the stakeholders. Developing change management and stakeholder management skills is vital for driving the adoption of HR analytics (Shet et al., 2021), a skill set that many of our students require to become competitive in the field and boost their chances of becoming certified professionals. Additionally, critical areas for students to understand are the ethical considerations surrounding HR analytics, such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the fair treatment of employees. The emergence of several disruptive technologies, such as computational intelligence techniques, data mining, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, has made it challenging to maintain ethics in HR data analytics (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Navigating these moral implications and the complexity of HR analytics is essential to the learning journey. HR analytics instructors and students need to keep up with the rapidly evolving HR technology landscape, as tools used for HR analytics can be challenging, especially if they have yet to have prior exposure to these tools. The interdisciplinary nature of HR analytics, which requires a blend of HR domain knowledge, data analysis skills, and business acumen, is demanding for some MBA students to master. Balancing the rigorous demands of their coursework, group projects, and other responsibilities only adds to the challenge.

Therefore, we needed more clarity between the courses students take and the competencies required for their certifications. Despite several obstacles we witnessed in teaching HR analytics to MBA students, course designers, instructors, and HR practitioners must incorporate and design pragmatic strategies to guide the students to be committed to the transformative field of HR analytics. By addressing these challenges head-on and providing the necessary support and resources, we are confident that students can develop the skills and confidence to thrive in this increasingly critical aspect of HR analytics practice.

Table 1: Insights into Emotional and Subjective Aspects in HR Analytics

Participant	Transcript Excerpt	Key Insight
Candidate May	"I would probably say that like sometimes employees wait for their year-end bonus..."	Awareness of financial incentives influencing employee retention
Candidate May	"Employees may have left the company in terms of better benefits, better employee communications..."	Recognition of factors contributing to employee dissatisfaction
Candidate Juliette	"So a good and engaged employee always gives or supplies all the document if somebody is onboarded..."	Identification of signs indicating employee uncertainty
Candidate Rose	"I have a feeling we're losing quite a few staff because we simply don't have places to send them."	Frustration with staffing challenges
Candidate Rose	"Looking at the age groupings actually surprised me a bit..."	Emotional response to unexpected data insights
Candidate Rose	"There are still further steps that need to be taken..."	Commitment to using data insights for strategic decisions
Candidate Rose	"If all HR professionals, did it instead of just black and white, it as to a resume..."	Emphasis on considering emotional and intuitive aspects in analytics
Candidate Jenny	"Tableau is the only one I use. I've never used the other ones before..."	Reluctance towards adopting new analytics tools
Candidate Jenny	"Yeah, actually happens here, not like workwise, but when I'm doing my own projects..."	Impact of limited dataset on data analysis capabilities

As faculty members teaching MBA students with a focus on HR analytics, it's crucial to further validate and explore the insights derived from the interview transcripts of the previous study regarding emotional awareness, subjectivity in data analytics, and emotional engagement with data. May's recognition of how compensation influences employee retention underscores the practical implications of emotional intelligence (EI) in HR decision-making, aligning with existing research highlighting EI as pivotal in understanding and managing employee emotions and motivations (Hochschild, 2012). Juliette's and Rose's experiences further emphasize the subjective interpretations and emotional responses inherent in HR analytics, reinforcing the need for students

to develop not only technical skills but also emotional competencies to navigate complex organizational dynamics (Picard, 1995). Jenny's perspectives on technology adoption and data limitations provide insights into the affective dimensions of analytical processes, suggesting that emotional factors influence how HR professionals interact with and leverage data-driven insights (Picard, 1995). Exploring these insights through deeper analysis and discussion in classroom settings can enrich students' understanding of the multifaceted nature of HR analytics. Engaging students in critical reflections on these themes can foster their ability to integrate emotional intelligence with technical expertise, preparing them to effectively address contemporary challenges in HR management. This approach aligns with educational goals aimed at equipping MBA students with the holistic skills needed to thrive in HR analytics roles, where emotion al intelligence and data-driven decision-making intersect to drive organizational success.

Theme F as shown by the transcripts of Participants May and Rose, below delves into HR professionals' emotional and attitudinal dimensions concerning data security and confidentiality, which are pivotal aspects within HR analytics. HR professionals manage sensitive information such as employee records and salary details, necessitating stringent measures to uphold data integrity and protect confidentiality. The transcripts highlight these concerns through discussions led by Rose and May.

Transcript details for May:

Video transcripts [May]

[00:06:37] "I've covered a little bit of it in my previous answer as well, such as, uh, you know, portraying data for different sort of presentations, uh, like, you know, working through all of the candidates or just organizing all of the data, such as, uh, you know, candidate data, which is very confidential, such as their Social Security numbers, social insurance numbers or any of their identifications, their background check reports and all of those things, which is very important to maintain compliance for the company. Um, and it provides a lot of value to the business as well because we can avoid any sort of legal risks by maintaining data accurately."

Transcript details for Rose:

Video transcripts [Rose]

[00:32:35] "So if I assign, for example, interview notes and I want to assign it that it's from this person's interview, but I want to make sure that they can't see all of the notes that we made and stuff because that's confidential. So, things like that, anything we need to put in here for confidentiality, anything that they need to sign, making sure that nobody else can access it, just the person that it's intended for."

Rose underscores the emotional weight of ensuring confidentiality in interview notes, advocating for restricted access to sensitive data to prevent unauthorized viewing or interaction. Her sentiments reflect the emotional aspect of HR professionals' responsibilities towards data security. Similarly, May emphasizes the ethical imperative of maintaining compliance and averting legal risks when handling confidential candidate data. These insights not only underscore the emotional stakes involved but also align with ethical considerations deeply rooted in the subjective realm of HR analytics. Integrating these emotional and ethical perspectives into MBA HR curriculum prepares students to navigate complex data management challenges with both technical proficiency and emotional intelligence, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the affective dimensions crucial for future HR leadership roles. The ethical imperatives and operational challenges inherent in data management within HR analytics, particularly concerning employee privacy and regulatory compliance, are deeply intertwined with the affective domain. HR professionals' responses to these challenges are often emotional, reflecting their concerns, sense of responsibility, and ethical considerations regarding the protection of employee privacy rights. These emotional responses significantly influence their decision-making processes, shaping their subjective interpretations of risks and ethical implications.

For MBA HR students preparing for roles in HR analytics, understanding these affective dimensions is crucial to equip them not only with technical skills but also with the emotional competencies needed to navigate complex data management issues responsibly. By integrating discussions on ethical dilemmas and real-world case studies into the curriculum, educators can effectively prepare students to uphold ethical standards and manage data privacy concerns adeptly in their future HR careers. This holistic approach ensures that students develop a well-rounded understanding of how emotions, ethics, and professional responsibilities intersect within the dynamic field of HR analytics.

E. ABK Model and Emotional Intelligence Theory: Integration with Narratives

In this section, we delve into the intersection of the ABK model and Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory, framed within the narratives and insights derived from our experience as faculty teaching MBA students. We explore how these frameworks illuminate the emotional and behavioral responses of MBA students engaging with PAPs, focusing on their development towards becoming Certified Professional Human Resources (CPHR) professionals. Moreover, we employ CSJT and Bourdieu's

capital theories as lenses to examine the broader social and cultural implications shaping these dynamics.

Teaching MBA students involves navigating diverse emotional landscapes as they engage with PAPs. The ABK Model's affective dimension, which emphasizes self-awareness and emotional regulation, is pivotal in this context. Our experiences reveal that students' initial encounters with PAPs often evoke a range of emotions—from curiosity and excitement to frustration and apprehension. For instance, introducing new platforms can overwhelm students, impacting their confidence and willingness to explore complex data sets (Jones, 2020; Smith et al., 2022; Brown, 2021). By fostering self-awareness, we equip students to recognize and manage these emotional responses effectively, aligning with EI Theory's emphasis on emotional self-awareness and regulation (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This awareness not only enhances their personal development but also cultivates resilience in navigating technological challenges and time-sensitive tasks essential for HR professionals (Bar-On, 1997; Petrides & Furnham, 2001).

Our exploration of the ABK model and EI Theory underscores the critical role of emotional self-awareness and regulation in the educational journey of MBA students. As faculty, we have observed firsthand how these frameworks influence students' responses to HR analytics tools. For example, in our HRIS class, where students engaged with real-time data and HR analytics tools, students unfamiliar with such platforms commonly experienced initial hesitancy and emotional fluctuations (Jones, 2020). These experiences highlight the importance of fostering emotional intelligence alongside technical proficiency. By integrating EI Theory into our teaching approach, we empower students to not only understand the technical aspects of PAPs but also to navigate effectively their emotional responses. This integration aligns with Goleman's framework, which emphasizes that self-awareness and emotional regulation are fundamental to effective decision-making and professional development (Goleman, 1995). Examining these dynamics through the lenses of CSJT and Bourdieu's capital theories provides deeper insights into the social and cultural contexts that shape students' perceptions and readiness to engage with HR analytics platforms. These theoretical perspectives help us understand how students' emotional responses are intertwined with their cultural backgrounds and social environments, influencing their learning experiences and professional trajectories.

F. Balancing Data Privacy and Ethics in HR Analytics

HR analytics has transformed how organizations manage talent, assess performance, and make strategic decisions. However, the discussion surrounding ethics, particularly regarding data privacy and algorithmic bias, is often underexplored. As future HR professionals and data analysts, students must be equipped to navigate these ethical dilemmas carefully. In the realm of HR analytics, data privacy is a paramount concern that refers to the proper handling of sensitive personal information, ensuring that individuals' data rights are respected. Organizations often collect vast amounts of employee data, including performance metrics, health information, and personal identifiers. A failure to protect this data can lead to breaches and misuse, resulting in significant consequences for both employees and the organization. To uphold data privacy, organizations should implement strict data access controls and employ anonymization techniques when analyzing data to protect individual identities. Additionally, it is essential to regularly review privacy policies to ensure compliance with regulations such as GDPR or HIPAA, thereby safeguarding employee information and maintaining trust.

For instance, as highlighted by HR professionals, interview notes, which are critical to the hiring process, should be kept confidential. Ensuring that only the intended parties have access to these sensitive records, while others are restricted from viewing them, emphasizes the importance of protecting data at all stages. As one participant expressed, “making sure that nobody else can access it, just the person that it’s intended for,” speaks to the responsibility of HR professionals to protect interview-related data. This real-world scenario underscores the emotional and ethical considerations involved in managing data privacy, which is not just a procedural task but one that carries significant ethical weight.

Another critical ethical consideration is algorithmic bias, which occurs when automated decision-making processes lead to unfair treatment of individuals based on characteristics such as race, gender, or age. For instance, an AI recruitment tool may unintentionally favor candidates from specific demographics due to biased training data or flawed algorithms, perpetuating inequities in hiring practices. To avert such biases, organizations should conduct regular audits of their algorithms to identify and mitigate any discrimination. Practitioners can also utilize diverse datasets to train algorithms, ensuring that representation spans various demographics. Furthermore, involving a multidisciplinary team in the development and evaluation of AI tools can help incorporate a range of perspectives, thus enhancing the fairness and accuracy of automated decisions.

Informed consent is another essential aspect of ethical HR analytics, as it ensures that employees understand what data is being collected and how it will be used. For example, an organization gathering employee engagement data through surveys should clearly inform employees about how their responses will influence workplace policies. This transparency requires that

organizations communicate data collection purposes and methodologies effectively, allowing employees to opt out or provide feedback on these practices. Cultivating a culture of transparency around data usage not only reinforces trust but also empowers employees to engage actively in the data collection process, making them more comfortable with how their personal information is utilized. Predictive analytics plays a significant role in forecasting future outcomes, impacting decisions related to hiring, promotions, and terminations. However, predicting employee turnover based solely on historical data without considering contextual factors may lead to unjust decisions regarding employee retention. To prevent this, it is crucial to regularly validate and adjust predictive models to reflect current workplace realities. Integrating qualitative insights alongside quantitative data can enhance decision-making, while engaging stakeholders in discussions about the implications of predictive analytics fosters a collaborative environment for ethical considerations. As HR analytics evolves, organizations must proactively address these ethical implications to ensure responsible data usage and maintain workplace integrity.

G. Navigating Ethical Dilemmas in Data-Driven HR Contexts

To effectively navigate the ethical dilemmas in data-driven HR analytics, organizations should establish a formal code of ethics that outlines acceptable practices for data usage. This code should address critical issues such as data privacy, informed consent, and algorithmic bias, providing a clear framework for ethical decision-making. Creating an ethics review board can also help evaluate new HR analytics projects, ensuring that they align with established ethical standards and best practices. Continuous education and training for HR professionals are also vital for cultivating an ethical workplace culture. Ongoing training on ethical data practices, privacy laws, and bias recognition equips professionals with the knowledge to handle ethical dilemmas competently. Encouraging whistleblowing mechanisms further supports this endeavor by establishing clear channels for reporting unethical practices or concerns related to HR analytics. Employees must feel safe to voice their concerns without fear of retaliation, fostering an environment where ethical considerations are prioritized.

Engaging stakeholders, including employees, management, and external experts, in data ethics discussions is crucial for ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making processes. Involving various voices, organizations can better understand the implications of their data practices and make informed choices that align with ethical principles. This collaborative approach helps identify potential ethical pitfalls and strengthens the overall integrity of HR analytics initiatives. As HR analytics continues to evolve, it is imperative to proactively address the ethical implications of data use. Students and practitioners can navigate the complex landscape of data-driven HR with integrity and responsibility by understanding the importance of data privacy, algorithmic bias, informed consent, and ethical predictive analytics. This comprehensive approach protects the organization and fosters trust and fairness in the workplace, ultimately leading to a more equitable and effective HR practice. Emphasizing ethical considerations in HR analytics is essential for creating a sustainable and responsible organizational culture that values the rights and dignity of all employees.

H. Integrating Emotional Intelligence into HR Analytics Curriculum

Integrating emotional intelligence (EI) training into HR analytics courses can significantly enhance participants' understanding of both employee data and interpersonal dynamics. According to Mattingly & Kraiger (2019), EI training fosters sophisticated information processing regarding one's emotions and those of others, enabling individuals to use this information effectively in workplace contexts. Blending EI training with HR analytics, participants can gain insights beyond traditional data analysis, allowing them to appreciate the emotional factors influencing employee behavior and organizational outcomes. One approach to incorporating EI into HR analytics is analyzing EI metrics. Participants can learn to collect and analyze data related to employee emotional intelligence, such as self-reported assessments and peer evaluations. Discussing how these EI metrics correlate with other important HR metrics, like employee engagement and turnover rates, students can better understand emotional intelligence's role in organizational success. This integration helps participants recognize the interplay between emotional dynamics and traditional performance indicators, leading to more informed decision-making.

Case studies provide another valuable method for demonstrating the impact of EI in organizations. Analyzing organizations that have successfully implemented EI training, participants can evaluate the performance metrics before and after such initiatives. This comparative analysis not only illustrates the tangible benefits of EI training but also aligns with the goals and objectives of HR programs. Such evidence can be instrumental in persuading stakeholders of the value of emotional intelligence in enhancing workplace culture and productivity. Workshops focusing on building EI skills, such as empathy and self-regulation, can enrich the learning experience. These interactive sessions allow participants to practice and refine their emotional intelligence in a supportive environment. Following the

workshops, participants can measure improvements in team dynamics or employee satisfaction through surveys and analytics, providing concrete evidence of the effectiveness of EI training. This hands-on approach reinforces the theoretical aspects of EI and highlights its practical applications in fostering a positive work environment.

One effective strategy to enhance HR analytics education is to incorporate the practical application of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) through university partnerships with leading platform vendors. With the rapid evolution of HR technology, numerous HRIS vendors offer trial access to their platforms, allowing organizations to explore their systems before committing to long-term purchases. This same model can be adopted within academic institutions, where universities establish relationships with HRIS vendors to provide students and faculty with hands-on experience using these platforms. By partnering with HRIS vendors, universities can create a more dynamic learning environment where students and faculty members have the opportunity to explore cutting-edge HR analytics tools. Just as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) students benefit from hands-on experience in wet and dry labs to apply theoretical concepts in real-world settings, students in HR analytics programs should be given the opportunity to interact with live platforms. For instance, HR analytics students could be granted access to HRIS tools, allowing them to engage with data processing, predictive modeling, and employee engagement metrics, thereby deepening their understanding of these systems in practice (Kolb, 1984). Our research also indicates that emotions play a key role in participants' interactions with AI and HRIS platforms. When students work with these tools in real-life scenarios, they experience emotional responses that are not just theoretical but deeply personal. These emotions, such as frustration, satisfaction, or confusion, provide rich opportunities for students to reflect on and discuss emotional dynamics in the workplace. Experiencing these emotions firsthand allows students to better understand how such emotions can influence decision-making and interactions in real-world HR contexts. This experiential learning approach provides a more nuanced and authentic understanding of emotional intelligence in HR analytics and supports the development of emotional competencies necessary for managing complex workplace dynamics (Goleman, 1995).

The notion of embedding practical experience within academic programs is grounded in experiential learning theory, which suggests that learning is most effective when students can engage in direct experience, reflection, and application (Kolb, 1984). This approach is not dissimilar to the way business analytics courses provide students with access to platforms such as Tableau to explore analytical functions. Just as business analytics students use tools like Tableau to visualize data and analyze business performance, HR analytics students can benefit from similar platforms that allow them to examine employee data, assess organizational behavior, and predict HR outcomes. Moreover, integrating vendor platforms into the curriculum not only enhances learning but also prepares students for the workforce by providing them with skills that are directly transferable to real-world HR functions. As HR technology continues to evolve, familiarity with these platforms will become an essential competency for future HR professionals (Jain & Jain, 2020). Furthermore, this model encourages collaboration between academia and industry, allowing students to work with tools that are actively shaping the HR landscape.

Lastly, incorporating emotional intelligence into predictive analytics offers a forward-thinking perspective on employee performance and satisfaction. By teaching participants how to utilize EI-related data in predictive models, they can forecast outcomes more accurately and develop strategies for improvement. Panel discussions with HR professionals who have successfully integrated EI into their organizations can further illuminate best practices and lessons learned. Blending emotional intelligence training with HR analytics, participants can cultivate a more holistic understanding of employee behavior and organizational health, ultimately leading to more effective HR practices that prioritize both data-driven insights and emotional well-being.

Integrating insights from Venkatesh, Viswanath, and Davis (2000) on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) extension can deepen our understanding of students' perceptions of PAPs. Their research highlights that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly influence users' attitudes and intentions to adopt new technologies in organizational settings. Applying this framework, we recognize that students' attitudes towards PAPs are shaped by the degree to which they perceive these platforms as beneficial and easy to use (Venkatesh, Viswanath, & Davis, 2000). Users' attitudes and intentions to adopt new technologies are strongly influenced by these two constructs—perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Venkatesh, Viswanath, & Davis, 2000). When users perceive a technology as useful and easy to use, they are more likely to have positive attitudes towards it and intend to use it regularly.

By applying the TAM framework, we can recognize that students' perceptions of PAPs are shaped by the extent to which they believe these platforms enhance their ability to analyze data, make decisions, and improve performance.

Table 2: Integration of Emotional Intelligence Theory with the ABK Model in HR Analytics

Dimensions	Emotional Intelligence Theory	ABK Model	Integration with ABK Model	Implications for HR Analytics	Educational Strategies
Affective	**Self-awareness:** Understanding one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and their impact on HR analytics knowledge.	Affective: Emotional drive and impact on attitudes towards HR analytics practices.	Self-awareness enhances understanding in HR analytics, guiding effective knowledge application.	Promotes introspection and awareness of emotional impact on analytics practice.	Faculty: Incorporate self-reflection exercises into curriculum to enhance emotional awareness in analytics practice. Administrators: Provide resources for emotional intelligence training to support student readiness and resilience. MBA Students: Engage in mindfulness practices to manage emotional responses and enhance learning. HRIS Vendors: Design user-friendly interfaces that support emotional regulation during analytics tasks.
	Self-regulation: Managing impulses and emotions for effective HR analytics decision-making.	Behavioral: Application of HR analytics tools and techniques.	Self-regulation ensures disciplined and effective use of HR analytics tools, optimizing decision-making.	Fosters disciplined approach to analytics, minimizing errors and optimizing outcomes.	Faculty: Integrate simulated scenarios for students to practice emotional regulation in analytics. Administrators: Support faculty in developing case studies that emphasize self-regulation in HR analytics contexts. MBA Students: Attend workshops on time management and stress reduction to improve self-regulation skills. HRIS Vendors: Provide training sessions on software functionalities that facilitate efficient data processing and analysis.
Behavioral	**Motivation:** Using emotional drive to deepen HR analytics understanding and applications.	Knowledge: Understanding HR analytics theories and data interpretation.	Motivation drives proactive learning and application in HR analytics, fostering comprehensive knowledge.	Drives continuous learning and innovation in analytics practices.	Faculty: Foster a culture of curiosity and exploration in analytics by highlighting real-world applications. Administrators: Create incentives for student-led analytics projects to stimulate motivation and innovation. MBA Students: Join industry networking events to stay updated on emerging trends and applications in HR analytics. HRIS Vendors: Offer certifications and continuous learning opportunities to enhance motivation and proficiency in analytics tools.
	Empathy: Understanding stakeholders' perspectives and emotions for improved HR analytics outcomes.	-	Empathy promotes stakeholder-centric analytics solutions, enhancing engagement and satisfaction.	Enhances stakeholder relationships through empathetic analytics practices.	Faculty: Encourage role-playing exercises to develop empathy skills in interpreting data for diverse stakeholders. Administrators: Facilitate diversity training to enhance cultural sensitivity in analytics projects. MBA Students: Participate in cross-functional teams to practice empathetic communication and collaboration. HRIS Vendors: Implement feedback mechanisms to capture user insights and improve user experience based on empathy principles.

	Relationship Management: Using emotional awareness for effective team collaboration in analytics.	-	Relationship management skills amplify teamwork, leveraging emotional intelligence for synergy.	Improves collaborative efforts and efficiency in analytics projects.
Knowledge	**Competence in using HR analytics tools and interpreting data.** Understanding the emotional aspects of learning analytics tools, fostering a supportive environment to reduce anxiety and improve confidence.	**Affective**: Building confidence and reducing anxiety when learning and applying HR analytics tools. **Behavioral**: Developing effective data interpretation and application skills. **Knowledge**: Comprehensive understanding of HR analytics concepts, methodologies, and data interpretation.		

Table 3: Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

Framework	Construct	Definition	Integration with ABK or EI Theory	Application in MBA Education
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	Perceived Usefulness	The user's perception of the extent to which a technology enhances job performance or effectiveness, assessing if the technology provides tangible benefits.	In the context of the ABK model, perceived usefulness aligns with the Knowledge dimension, where users evaluate how technology aids their decision-making processes. Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory emphasizes self-awareness and motivation, which can influence perceived usefulness by shaping how individuals perceive the benefits of technology in enhancing their tasks.	Applying TAM to MBA students' engagement with People Analytics Platforms (PAPs) enhances understanding of their perceptions and attitudes. Early exposure may initially seem complex, but familiarity enhances perceived usefulness in enhancing analytical skills and decision-making.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	Perceived Ease of Use	The user's perception of the ease or difficulty in using the technology, including factors like user interface design, task complexity, and learning curve.	Perceived ease of use relates to the Behavioral dimension of the ABK model, focusing on how users interact with technology. EI Theory's self-regulation and empathy can influence perceived ease of use by helping individuals manage emotional responses to technology challenges and improving communication with user interfaces.	Emphasizing perceived ease of use among MBA students in navigating PAPs is crucial. Facilitating comfort with these platforms through intuitive design and reduced complexity positively influences adoption behaviors.

For instance, in an HR Strategy MBA course, I often use practical exercises where students interact directly with a tool like BambooHR. In one such exercise, I present them with the Nine-Box Matrix, a tool that helps identify high performers and those who may need development. I ask them to use the matrix to make decisions, such as how to allocate resources for training and career development. While the matrix alone gives insight, it's the decision-making aspect—making the matrix scalable—that helps students understand how analytics can transform into real-world decisions.

When students are given the opportunity to actively use such tools, they can see firsthand how analytics provides HR professionals with powerful support in their decision-making processes. This practical experience is critical because, much like the perceived usefulness of PAPs in the TAM model, students begin to see the technology as a useful resource only when they understand how it can be applied to real situations. However, this awareness often doesn't come easily. Many students initially find analytics overwhelming because their prior education hasn't equipped them with the necessary skills. They may not even be aware of the emotions they feel—often confusion or frustration—until they interact with the technology in a supportive, practical context. This highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in technology adoption. Emotions aren't innate; they're learned and shaped by our experiences. Just like students' evolving perceptions of PAPs, their emotional responses to these tools can change as they engage with them and gain a better understanding of their value.

Similarly, the perceived ease of use of PAPs directly influences students' willingness to engage with these platforms. A user-friendly interface and reduced complexity in navigating these platforms increase students' confidence in using the technology, which in turn impacts their overall adoption intentions (Venkatesh, Viswanath, & Davis, 2000). This connects to the behavioral aspect of the ABK model, where students' interactions with the platforms are shaped by their comfort level and ability to manage the technology effectively. Additionally, emotional intelligence (EI) theory plays a complementary role in this process, as students' emotional responses to the perceived usefulness and ease of use of PAPs can impact their attitudes toward adoption. For instance, initial feelings of frustration or overwhelm with the complexity of a platform can negatively affect perceptions of ease of use. However, as students develop greater self-awareness and emotional regulation—core components of EI—they may become more resilient in navigating challenges and may eventually perceive the platform as more useful and easier to use (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This emotional adaptability enhances their engagement with PAPs and supports more positive attitudes and intentions toward technology adoption. By integrating TAM with EI and the ABK model offers a holistic approach to understanding MBA students' engagement with PAPs. By addressing both the cognitive and emotional factors that influence technology adoption, we can better support students in overcoming initial barriers and fostering sustained use of analytical platforms. As students gain more experience with these tools, their perceptions of PAPs evolve, potentially leading to stronger intentions to integrate these technologies into their future HR practices.

5. Theoretical Contributions

In exploring the intersection of the ABK model and EI Theory within MBA education, our insights underscore the significance of emotional and behavioral responses among students engaging with PAPs. These frameworks provide an understanding of how students navigate and interpret data analytics tools, crucial for their development as Certified Professional Human Resources (CPHR) professionals. Our observations reveal that initial encounters with PAPs evoke diverse emotional responses, ranging from curiosity and excitement to frustration and apprehension (Smith et al., 2022; Brown, 2021). This emotional landscape underscores the importance of self-awareness and emotional regulation, central tenets of both the ABK model and EI Theory (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). By fostering self-awareness, students can effectively manage these emotional fluctuations, thereby enhancing their confidence and decision-making capabilities in handling complex data sets.

For instance, during one HRIS lecture, we introduced a platform where students could engage with real-time data and navigate various HR analytics tools. Despite the availability of this learning opportunity, only 2 out of 32 students actively participated, highlighting a significant gap in both student interest and readiness to engage with analytical platforms (Jones, 2020). This scenario underscores the need for educators to create environments that foster emotional awareness and readiness among students, preparing them for the complexities of modern HR analytics roles.

Moreover, integrating insights from Venkatesh, Viswanath, and Davis (2000) on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) extension enriches our understanding of students' perceptions towards PAPs. The TAM's constructs of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence students' attitudes and intentions to adopt new technologies, aligning with both the ABK model's focus on behavioral responses and EI Theory's emphasis on motivation and self-regulation (Venkatesh, Viswanath, & Davis, 2000; Parker, 2024). Theoretical contributions of this integration extend beyond traditional approaches by emphasizing the holistic development of future HR professionals. By equipping students with emotional intelligence alongside technical proficiency, MBA programs can prepare graduates who are adept at navigating the dynamic demands of HR analytics roles. This comprehensive approach not only enhances personal growth but also fosters resilience and adaptability in addressing organizational challenges.

In practical terms, understanding emotional and behavioral responses to PAPs informs strategic curriculum design and pedagogical practices. Tailoring educational interventions to enhance emotional intelligence and analytical skills among students can significantly impact their readiness for data-driven decision-making in professional settings. Looking forward, future research should explore longitudinal studies and comparative analyses to further validate the efficacy of integrating the ABK model and EI Theory in MBA education. Such endeavors will advance educational practices by offering deep insights into the sustained impact of emotional intelligence on learning outcomes and professional competencies. Applying this framework to MBA students' engagement with PAPs, we can deepen our understanding of their perceptions and attitudes towards these tools. MBA students, early in their exposure to PAPs, may initially perceive them as complex or overwhelming. However, as they gain familiarity and experience, their perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of these platforms become pivotal in shaping their attitudes and intentions to use them regularly. In the context of MBA education and the use of PAPs, understanding students' perceptions through the TAM lens provides insights into their adoption behavior. MBA students, often new to these platforms, may initially find them daunting or complex. However, by emphasizing the perceived usefulness—how PAPs can enhance their analytical skills and decision-making—and perceived ease of use—ensuring they feel comfortable navigating and using these platforms—we can positively influence their attitudes and intentions towards these technologies.

Furthermore, students' intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in their perseverance through PAPs' challenges. Their fascination with analytics and the drive to understand data patterns contribute significantly to their engagement and learning outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Vroom, 1964). While empathy was not explicitly discussed in the current context, it is integral when understanding stakeholders' perspectives and communicating data insights effectively (Davis, 1983; Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). Empathy enables students to tailor their communication styles and data presentations based on stakeholders' emotional states and needs, enhancing the impact of their analyses within organizational contexts. Moreover, collaborative skills—part of EI Theory's social skills dimension—are essential in navigating group projects or team-based assignments related to HR analytics. Students leverage these interpersonal skills to foster collaboration, promote information sharing, and drive effective decision-making processes (Tjosvold, 1984; Gardner & Gino, 2018). This integrated approach, merging the ABK Model's Affective dimension with EI Theory, can ensure that MBA students are not only proficient in the technical aspects of HR analytics but also equipped with the emotional competencies necessary for success in data-driven professions. Educators can thereby prepare future HR professionals who excel not only in analytical rigor but also in navigating the interpersonal dynamics inherent in HR analytics roles.

In our teaching experiences, we observe that fostering a positive perception of usefulness—how these platforms can enhance their analytical capabilities and decision-making processes—and ease of use—ensuring that students feel comfortable and proficient in navigating PAPs—is crucial. Aligning these insights with EI Theory and the ABK Model's Affective dimension, which emphasizes self-awareness and emotional regulation, allows us to holistically prepare students for the challenges and opportunities in HR analytics. By integrating the TAM extension, we augment our pedagogical approach to emphasize not only technical proficiency but also the psychological factors influencing students' acceptance and engagement with PAPs. This integrated perspective enhances our ability to cultivate future HR professionals who are adept in both the technical and emotional dimensions of data-driven decision-making.

Pedagogical Approaches for Emotional Self-Management in HR Analytics Education

In the realm of HR analytics education, particularly for MBA students pursuing the CPHR designation, there is a growing recognition of the importance of emotional intelligence. However, while the current curriculum effectively integrates theories and practical applications of PAPs, it often falls short in addressing the specific pedagogical strategies necessary for students to develop robust self-management and self-regulation skills in the context of HR analytics. This section delves deeper into these pedagogical needs and proposes actionable approaches to enhance emotional competence among HR students. Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and Critical Social Justice theory (Fraser, 1995), this study has already established the significance of emotional intelligence, cultural capital, and social justice considerations in HR education. Building on these frameworks, we explore how these elements can be operationalized within pedagogical practices to foster emotional self-management and self-regulation in students, specifically within the context of HR analytics.

Qualitative interviews with HR professionals and faculty members have highlighted a notable gap in the curriculum: while students are introduced to the concepts of emotional intelligence and its relevance to HR analytics, there is insufficient emphasis on the practical pedagogy required to develop these skills. This gap is particularly evident in the areas of emotional self-awareness, emotional regulation, and the application of these skills in high-pressure, data-driven environments.

Table 4: Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

Strategy	Description
Integrative Emotional Intelligence Workshops in HR Analytics	Regular workshops focusing on emotional intelligence skills, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, specifically in the context of using PAPs. These workshops should incorporate role-playing scenarios and simulations that mirror real-world HR analytics challenges, such as interpreting complex data and making strategic decisions based on analytics insights. Facilitated by experienced HR professionals and psychologists, these sessions would provide students with practical tools and techniques to manage their emotions effectively while navigating PAPs.
Reflective Practice and Journaling with a Focus on Analytics Tasks	Encouraging students to maintain reflective journals where they document their emotional responses to various HR analytics tasks and scenarios. This practice helps in fostering self-awareness and provides a medium for students to analyze their emotional triggers and responses, especially when dealing with complex data sets and analytics tools. Incorporating guided reflection sessions where students can discuss their journal entries and receive feedback from peers and instructors, with a focus on improving their engagement with PAPs.
Mindfulness and Stress-Reduction Techniques for Analytics Contexts	Integrating mindfulness practices and stress-reduction techniques into the HR analytics curriculum. Techniques such as meditation, deep-breathing exercises, and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) can help students develop better emotional regulation skills, particularly when working with large and intricate data sets. Offering optional mindfulness workshops and resources to support students in managing stress and enhancing focus during HR analytics projects.
Emotional Intelligence Assessment and Feedback Specific to HR Analytics	Implementing regular assessments of students' emotional intelligence using validated EI assessment tools, with a specific focus on their interactions with PAPs. Providing personalized feedback based on these assessments can help students understand their strengths and areas for improvement in the context of HR analytics. Creating individualized development plans that outline specific actions and resources to enhance students' emotional competencies in HR analytics.
Collaborative Learning and Peer Support in HR Analytics Projects	Promoting collaborative learning environments where students work in teams to solve HR analytics problems. These group activities can help students practice emotional regulation in social contexts and develop empathy and communication skills while engaging with PAPs. Establishing peer support groups where students can share their experiences and strategies for managing emotions in a supportive, non-judgmental setting, particularly during analytics projects.

6. CONCLUSION

The study sheds light on the critical role of emotional dimensions in HR analytics education for MBA students pursuing the CPHR designation. By drawing on faculty narratives and insights from previous research (Parker, 2024), the findings reveal the complex interplay between emotional responses, cultural capital, and technological adoption in the context of People Analytics Platforms (PAPs). This research integrates Bourdieu's theory of capital, Critical Social Justice Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to provide a robust theoretical foundation. These frameworks help in understanding the diverse emotional experiences of students as they engage with HR analytics tools. Specifically, Bourdieu's theory helps explain the influence of cultural and social capital on students' interactions with PAPs, while Critical Social Justice Theory provides insights into how social justice considerations impact students' learning experiences. TAM is used to evaluate students' perceived usefulness

and ease of use of HR analytics tools, highlighting the importance of fostering positive attitudes and reducing apprehension towards these technologies.

The research emphasizes that emotional intelligence (EI) is essential for enabling students to effectively navigate the challenges and complexities of HR analytics. Incorporating the Attitude, Behavior, Knowledge (ABK) model and Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory, the study highlights the need for developing students' emotional awareness and regulation skills alongside their technical proficiency. This dual focus on EI and technical skills is crucial for achieving the CPHR certification and preparing students for effective practice in the field. The study provides practical perspectives for students, instructors, course designers, and other stakeholders involved in HR analytics education. It underscores the need for curriculum enhancements that prioritize the integration of emotional competence and cultural fluency with the development of analytical capabilities. Instructors and management are encouraged to create supportive learning environments that empower students to approach HR analytics with confidence, empathy, and a nuanced understanding of the social justice considerations involved. Finally, this study makes a significant contribution to the evolving discourse on HR analytics education. It highlights the interplay between emotional dynamics and technological adoption, offering valuable insights for MBA programs and HR professionals. The holistic educational framework proposed in this research promises to better prepare future HR leaders to navigate the multifaceted challenges of the data-driven landscape. This approach ultimately leads to more effective and socially responsible decision-making in the field of human resources, equipping students to become empathetic and competent HR professionals in an increasingly complex world.

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