



Artificial Intelligence in Refugee Employment Services

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Introduction

Refugees in Canada face barriers to securing **employment** within their fields of education and work experience, resulting in **deskilled, low-waged** jobs and increased risk of mental health challenges.

Settlement agencies provide employment services but high client workloads hinder customized support and funding models incentivize number of job placements, rather than quality of employment.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being widely incorporated by recruiters for job searches, screening candidates, and assessments. There are also AI tools in the market that may support employment services like language training, resume enhancing, mock interviews, and service chatbots.

Objective

This study explores the opportunities and challenges faced by Canadian settlement agencies in integrating AI tools to help refugee clients secure employment commensurate with their qualifications.

Results of Thematic Analysis

Participants noted that government **funding metrics** prioritize service volume over employment quality, while emphasizing the burden of **high caseloads**. Discussing AI as a potential solution for their challenges revealed 3 main themes:

1. Knowledge & Perceptions of AI

- Most participants said they had **limited knowledge** about AI
- Majority were **optimistic** about using AI tools, said they could be helpful, save time, and improve service quality
- Concerns included **data privacy** breach, **non-consensual data usage**, skepticism of accuracy, and **transparency** of AI use
- Few feared AI replacing their job

2. Barriers to Adoption & Mitigations

- Main barriers for counsellor use included **funding** for technology, **time** investment for learning, changing workplace **culture**
- Barriers for use by some refugee clients may be **digital literacy**, English **language** literacy, and **access** to technology
- Mitigation strategies highlighted **trainings** on tools, basic computer skills classes for clients, using **multilingual** tools, and providing computer labs for accessibility.

3. Applications of AI

- **ChatGPT** is commonly used for grammar, resumes, and finding resources
- Most interest in AI adoption was for **mock interviews** and **resume** building
- Two agencies were in development or **testing stages** for tools including website Chatbots, mock interviews, resume enhancing, and soft skills training
- Testing for **algorithmic bias** was critical for adoption as it can perpetuate discrimination, inequality, and human bias in decision-making
- Most participants mentioned their organization does not currently have **policies for AI usage**

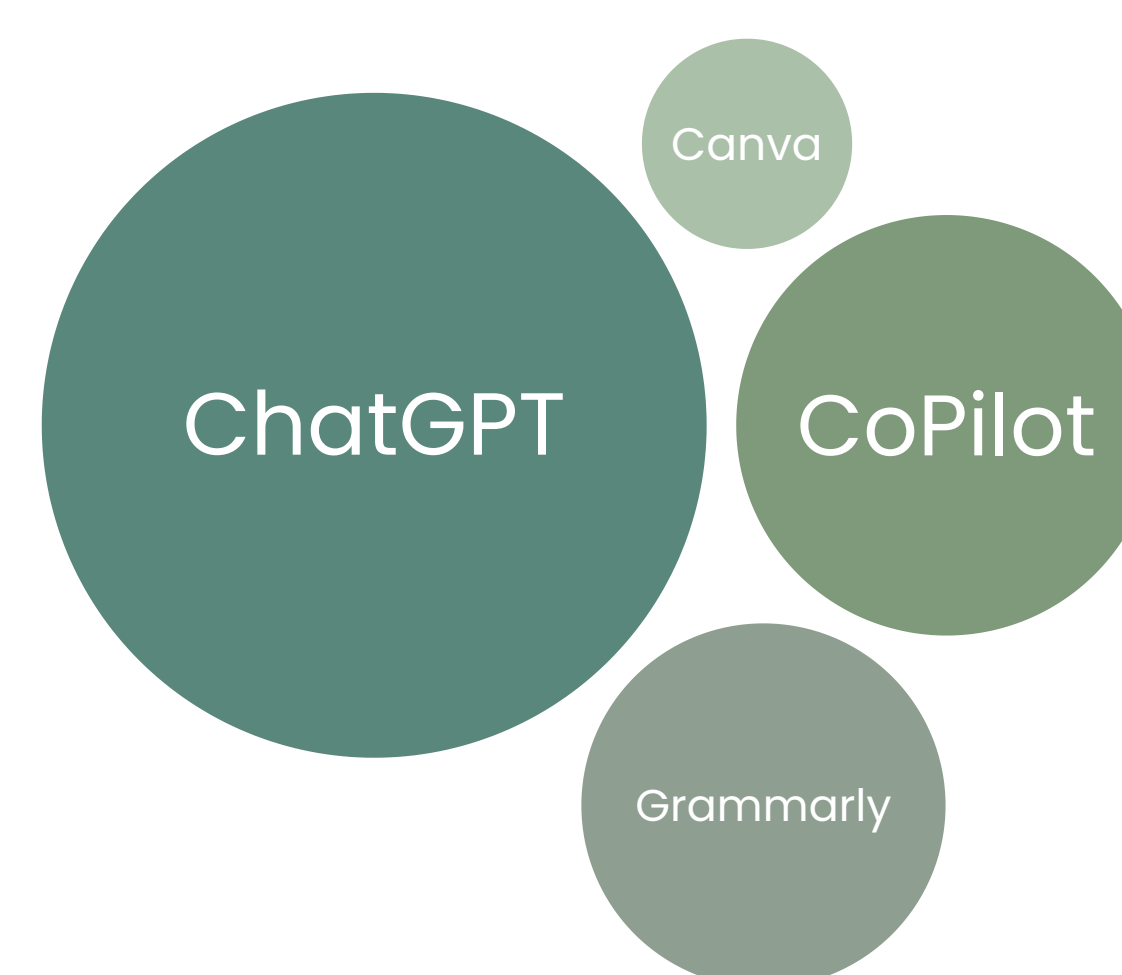


Figure 1. AI tools used by participants (ChatGPT was most common)

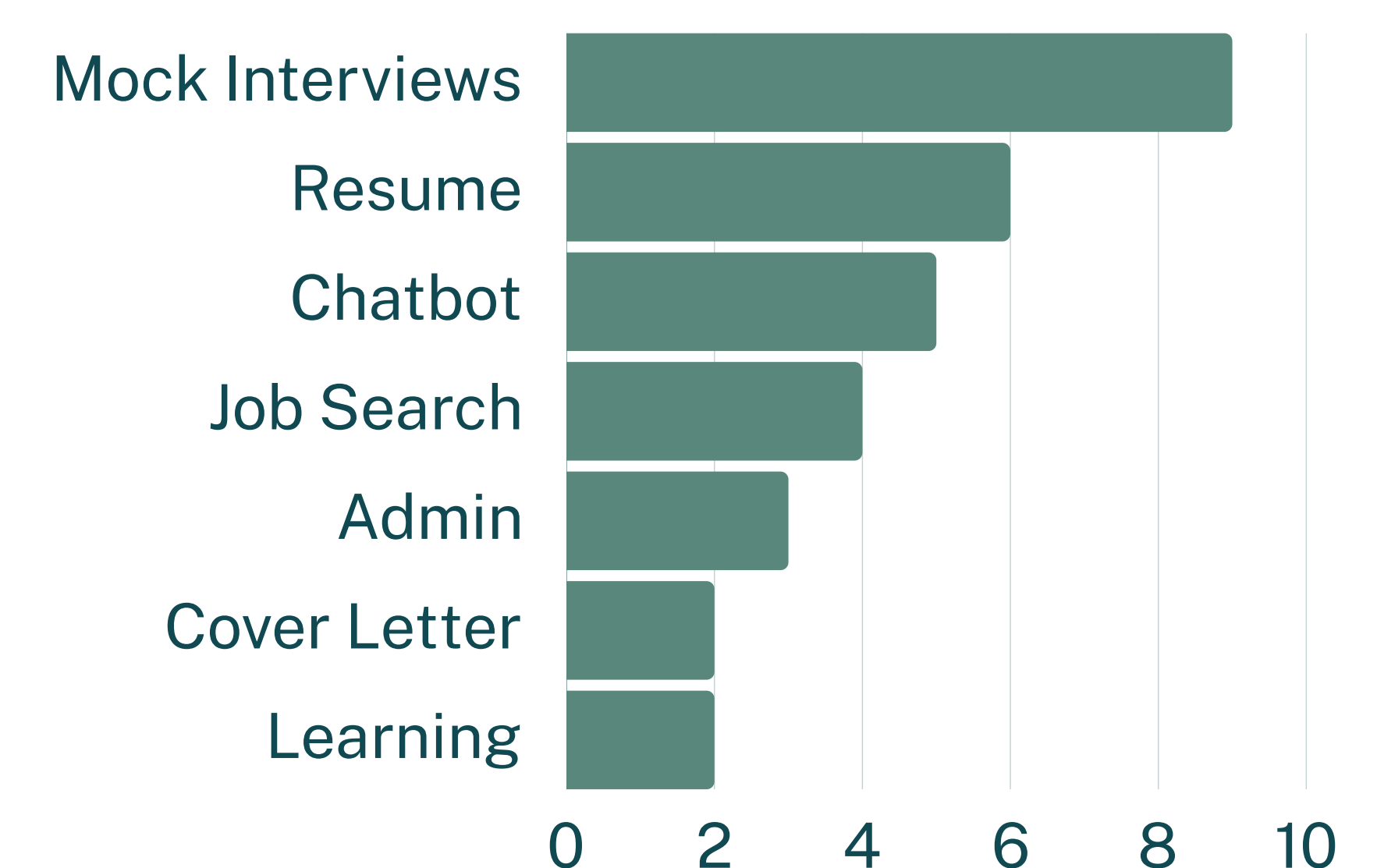


Figure 2. Number of Participants Interested in Specific AI Applications

Conclusion

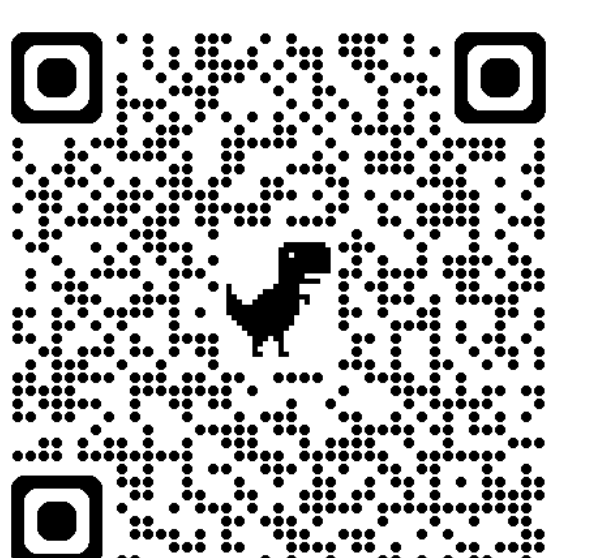
This study found that AI tools have the potential to improve refugee employment services by enhancing **efficiency** and service **quality**. **Funding, training, algorithmic bias** testing, and clear usage **guidelines** are crucial for effective implementation. However, addressing refugee **deskilling** requires a policy shift to include **measurable targets** for employment outcomes aligned with qualifications.

Limitations & Future Research

- Possible sampling bias as participants recruited may have had a positive outlook on AI adoption
- Findings based on experience with mainstream tools like ChatGPT, not hands-on trials
- Future work may include refugee perspectives, participants with limited AI interest, and pilot testing of AI tools with clients and counsellors

References

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