

Where are We Heading? A Literature Review of the Future of Work and Workplace Transformation

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Abstract

Digitalisation, flexible and hybrid working, AI, platform-based working and workforce reskilling are driving change to the future of work. The strongest converging evidence indicates that flexible work arrangements are generally associated with improved employee outcomes as a meta-analysis of 113 studies involving 88,618 participants found greater job satisfaction, organisational commitment, autonomy, life satisfaction, work - family interface, and family satisfaction, while a separate meta-analysis of 33 studies involving 90,602 participants found better physical health, reduced absenteeism, and fewer somatic symptoms. But changes in the workplace have different impacts. The results of the artificial-intelligence research review revealed that positive results were found in about 68% of the studies, mixed results in 24% and no significant results in 8% of the studies, and the results at the level of listed companies in China revealed that the use of digital technologies led to a decrease in the total number of employment, but an increase in the proportion of highly skilled employees. With proper technology, communication, leadership, training, and performance systems, remote and hybrid work can lead to better work-life balance, satisfaction, productivity, and adaptive performance; however, the lack of these can create increased stress, "blurriness," and inability to disconnect. Despite providing some autonomy and flexibility for some workers, platform work is also associated with greater precarity and work - family conflict for others, especially women with care responsibilities. Transformation overall is neither good nor bad; it is as good or as bad as a company's capabilities, leadership, skills, social protection, cultural fit and work design. Future research is needed to increase population coverage, clarify the distinction of AI technologies, align outcome measures, and explore long-term employment, job-quality, safety, and equity implications.

Keywords

Remote, work, workplace, transformation, technology, future of work, employee, artificial.