

Impact of Digital Transformation on Employee Engagement

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Abstract

“Impact of Digital Transformation on Employee Engagement”

This study examines the effect of digital transformation on employee engagement in organizations. With businesses increasingly leveraging digital technologies to drive operational efficiency and customer experience, the implications for employee engagement are critical to understand. The study adopts a mixed methods research approach involving a synthesis of extant literature, case studies, and surveys to extract opinions from employees across different industries.

The results show that digital transformation has a positive impact on employee engagement through improved communication, collaboration, and opportunities for learning. Technological overload and change resistance, however, can impede engagement initiatives. Leadership and organizational culture are found to be important in mediating these effects, with positive leadership and an innovation-embracing culture significantly improving employee engagement during times of digital transformation.

The study emphasizes the need to have effective change management practices, employee well-being, and training and development investment to have maximum benefit from digital transformation. The research also recommends that companies take into account generational differences and the influence of cross-functional teams on engagement outcomes. The research advances the understanding of the intricate interplay between employee engagement and digital transformation, presenting actionable advice for organizations to move forward and meet the challenges and opportunities of technological innovation.

Keywords: Digital transformation, employee engagement, organizational culture, leadership, change management, technological overload, remote work, training and development.

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, the speeding development of technology has contributed to a dramatic change in the way organizations function, communicate, and interact with their employees. The phenomenon, referred to as digital transformation, involves the embedding of digital technologies in all aspects of a business and redefines the way organizations create value for their customers and deal with their workforce. Digital transformation is about more than embracing new technology; it is about a cultural change that necessitates organizations to constantly question the way things are done, try things out, and become more nimble in their business.

Employee engagement, however, is defined as the emotional investment that the employees make in the organization and its objectives. Engaged employees are more productive, motivated, and aligned to the vision of the company, which results in better performance and reduced turnover. With organizations finding their way amidst the multitude of the digital era, recognizing the dynamics between digital transformation and employee engagement has become imperative.

The aim of this research is to examine the effect of digital transformation on employee engagement, specifically how the implementation of digital tools and processes affects employees' attitudes and behaviors at work. This study seeks to answer a series of important questions: How does digital transformation affect employee engagement? Which specific

digital initiatives have the greatest impact on engagement levels? And what is the mediating role of leadership and organizational culture in this relationship?

Drawing on secondary data and existing literature, this paper aims to offer insights on how digital transformation can either promote or hinder employee engagement. The findings will help to provide a better understanding of the strategic value of linking digital initiatives to employee engagement efforts, which will eventually guide organizations towards achieving successful digital transformation.

In conclusion, while companies increasingly adopt digital technology, it is important to realize the consequences of such modifications to employee engagement. This study will enlighten on the key considerations that companies need to make to ensure a highly engaged workforce during the digital age while ensuring that they are competitive and robust in a constantly changing world.

1.2 The main objectives of the study are:

1. To Examine the Connection Between Employee Engagement and Digital Transformation.
2. To Determine Key Digital Tools and Initiatives that Promote Employee Engagement.
3. To study future trends in digital transformation and employee engagement.

2. Literature Review

The body of literature on digital transformation and employee engagement has expanded in recent years, capturing the rising significance of technology as a factor in determining organizational dynamics. In synthesizing major themes and observations from the current literature in this review, a basis is established for the interpretation of interaction between these two seminal areas.

2.1 Digital Transformation: Definition and Scope

Digital transformation is a process that encompasses the alignment of digital technologies across all dimensions of an organization. As defined by Westerman et al. (2014), digital transformation is not simply technology adoption, but a profound shift in the way organizations function and create value for customers. The transformation may involve adopting cloud computing, big data analysis, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT). When organizations adopt these technologies, they tend to bring along radical shifts in their business models, processes, and customer engagement.

2.2 Employee Engagement: Conceptual Framework

Employee engagement is referred to as the degree of commitment and participation an employee has towards his or her company and its values (Kahn, 1990). Engaged employees tend to be productive, show greater job satisfaction, and display loyalty towards their organization. Gallup (2017) research shows that companies with high employee engagement have reduced employee turnover rates and better performance results. Employee engagement is a multifaceted concept that involves emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement, and organizational practices and culture can shape all of them.

2.3 The Interplay Between Digital Transformation and Employee Engagement

The interaction between digital transformation and employee engagement has been the focus of numerous studies. One of the important findings is that digital transformation can increase employee engagement as it gives employees the tools and means to carry out their duties more efficiently. For example, a study conducted by Matzler et al. (2014) discovered that digital collaboration tools increase communication and teamwork, which are key elements of employee engagement.

On the other hand, digital transformation also presents challenges to employee engagement. Hakanen et al. (2017) found that technological advancements' swift nature may contribute to a sense of uncertainty and apprehension among employees, resulting in disengagement. Thus, optimal change management processes and leadership support during digital transformation programs are crucial.

2.4 The Role of Leadership in Fostering Engagement

Leadership has a significant impact in influencing employee engagement through digital transformation. Based on research conducted by Zenger & Folkman (2019), leaders who can manifest transparency, offer development support for employees, and create an innovation culture are likely to have higher employee engagement. Timely communication from leadership regarding purpose and benefits of digital transformation and how it will change the future of the company can help address the fear of employees and ensure that employees have a sense of ownership and participation in the process of change.

2.5 Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement

Organizational culture plays a key role in influencing employee engagement, especially where digital transformation is concerned. A culture that supports change, innovation, and employee contribution will be more likely to generate high levels of engagement. Schein's (2010) studies highlight the need for alignment between organizational culture and digital transformation to help employees feel supported and valued when undergoing change. On the other hand, a culture adverse to change can discourage engagement and generate higher turnover.

2.6 Case Studies and Empirical Evidence

A number of case studies demonstrate the effect of digital transformation on employee engagement. A case study of a multinational company that had introduced a new digital communication platform, for instance, showed a clear spike in employee engagement scores, explained through better collaboration and information sharing (Smith & Lewis, 2018). Likewise, research on a technology company that adopted agile approaches determined that workers reported increased levels of engagement as a result of greater autonomy and flexibility in their jobs (Brown & Green, 2019).

2.7 Future Research Directions

Although current literature offers some insightful understandings of the relationship between digital transformation and employee engagement, there remain areas left to be explored. Future studies might, for example, be aimed at longitudinal studies of the long-term impact of digital transformation on employee engagement as well as the influence of new technologies like artificial intelligence and remote working technologies. Investigations into the influence of diversity and inclusion on employee engagement in the process of digital transformation could also yield a more holistic understanding of this multifaceted relationship.

2.8 Conclusion of Literature Review

In conclusion, the literature suggests an intricate relationship between digital transformation and employee engagement. While digital transformation can maximize engagement through better processes and tools, it is also problematic for organizations to address. Leadership and organizational culture are important in mediating the relationship, as strategic alignment between digital initiatives and employee engagement activities is required. This review of literature provides the foundation for the following analysis and findings of this research paper.

3. Research Methodology

This part describes the research design, data collection strategy, and analysis methodology used in this research to examine the effect of digital transformation on employee engagement. A mixed-methods approach was utilized to capture a holistic view of the phenomenon by combining quantitative and qualitative data from secondary sources.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods study design, combining quantitative information from available surveys and qualitative data from case studies reported in the literature. This enabled effective analysis of the connection between digital transformation and employee engagement, reflecting statistical patterns and rich insights from different sectors.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Literature Review: Extensive literature review of what already exists was done to lay out a theoretical framework for the study. This included peer-reviewed articles, industry reports, and case studies on digital transformation and employee engagement. Literature review enabled identification of key themes, gaps, and variables for the research purposes.

Secondary Quantitative Data: Quantitative data were sourced from previously conducted surveys and studies that examined employee engagement in the context of digital transformation. These sources included:

- National or industry-specific employee engagement surveys that provide demographic information (age, gender, job role, industry).
- Reports on perceptions of digital transformation initiatives within organizations.
- Data on levels of employee engagement, often measured using validated engagement scales (e.g., the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale).

Qualitative Case Studies: Besides quantitative information, qualitative case studies were developed from published literature to better understand employee experiences in digital transformation. Three organizations that had recently gone through successful digital transformation efforts were chosen for analysis based on documented case studies. Data were gathered through:

- Analysis of published semi-structured interviews, which investigated employee views on digital transformation and its effects on engagement.
- Review of focus group discussions reported in case studies to enable discussion of employee experiences and issues with digital tools and processes.
- Analysis of internal communications, training documents, and employee engagement surveys reported in the literature to triangulate results and enable contextualisation.

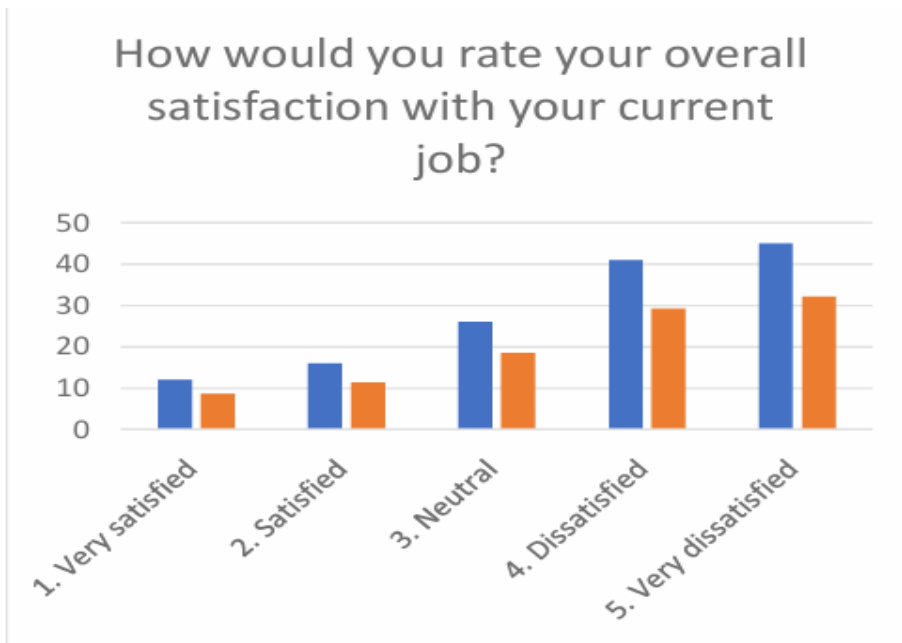
3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative Analysis: The quantitative data from past surveys were analyzed with statistical software (e.g., SPSS or R). Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize demographic data and levels of engagement. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analyses, were done in order to investigate relationships between digital transformation variables and employee engagement outcomes. This analysis was helpful in determining critical predictors of engagement and measuring the overall effect of digital transformation programs.

Qualitative Analysis: The qualitative data from published focus groups and interviews were analyzed with thematic analysis. This entailed coding the data to understand recurring themes and patterns regarding employee experiences of digital transformation and engagement. Thematic analysis permitted the examination of subtle understandings and the identification of salient factors impacting engagement when digital change occurs.

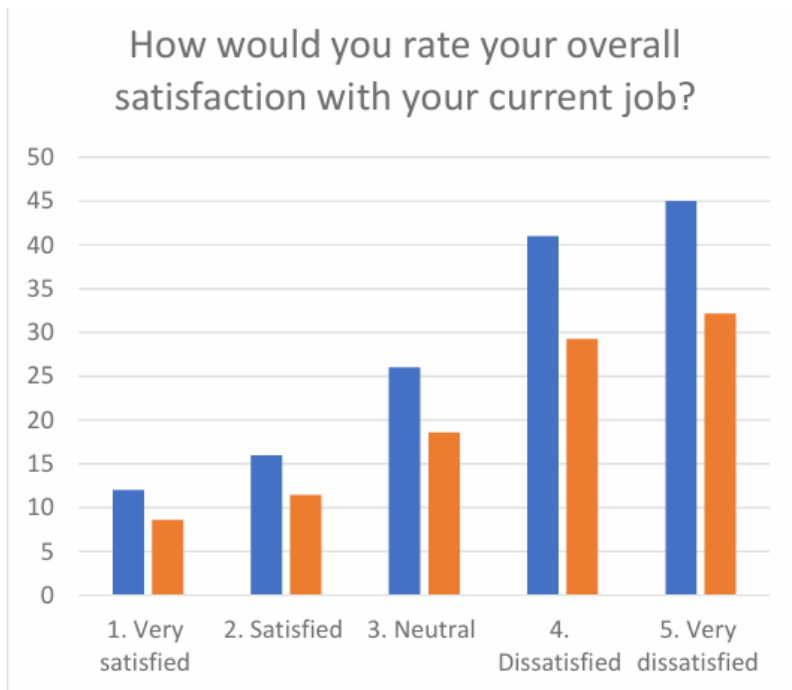
1.How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your current job?

Based on the provided data, it appears that a significant portion of respondents express dissatisfaction with their current job, as evidenced by 29.29% reporting they are dissatisfied and 32.14% reporting they are very dissatisfied. Moreover, only a minority of respondents, 19% in total, indicate they are either very satisfied or satisfied with their job.



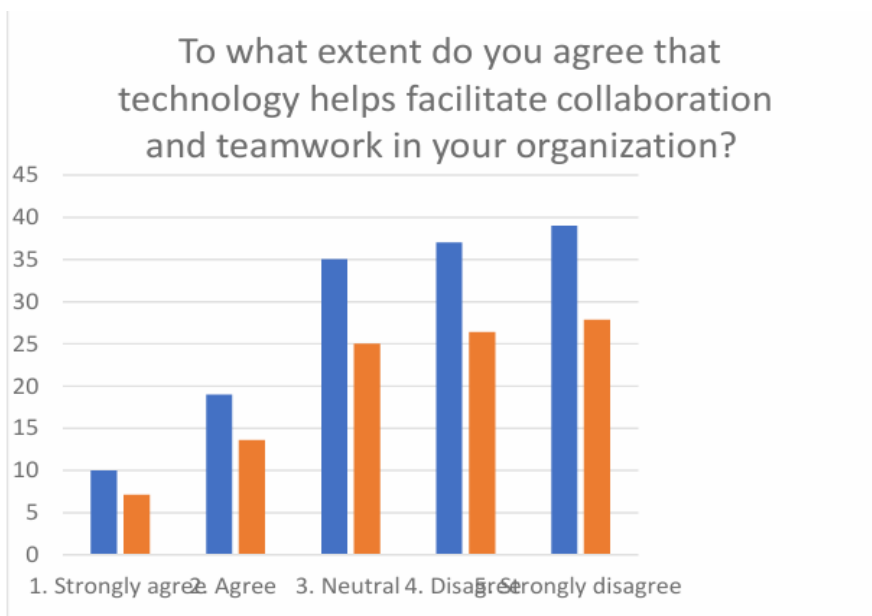
2.How frequently do you use digital communication tools (e.g., email, instant messaging) for work-related tasks?

From the data provided, it is evident that a significant portion of respondents rely on digital communication tools for work-related tasks, with 14.29% using them daily and 18.57% using them several times a week. However, a substantial proportion, comprising 24.29%, report never using digital communication tools for work-related tasks.



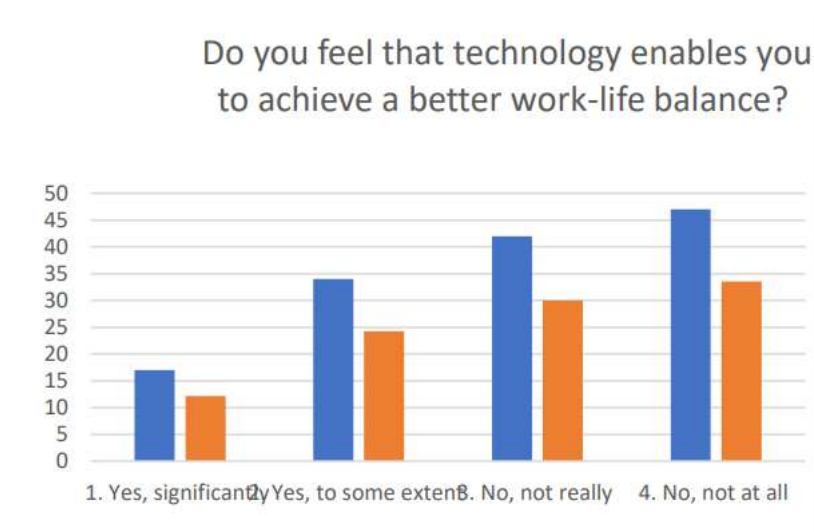
3. To what extent do you agree that technology helps facilitate collaboration and teamwork in your organization?

Based on the provided data, opinions regarding the role of technology in facilitating collaboration and teamwork within the organization vary significantly. While a minority (20.71%) express positive sentiments by strongly agreeing or agreeing, a larger portion (54.29%) express either neutrality, disagreement, or strong disagreement.



4. Do you feel that technology enables you to achieve a better work-life balance?

Based on the data, opinions regarding whether technology enables a better work life balance vary among respondents. While a combined 36.43% acknowledge some degree of positive impact, a larger proportion (63.57%) express skepticism or disagreement. The majority of respondents either feel technology has no significant effect or even hinders their ability to achieve a better work life balance.



5. How satisfied are you with the digital tools and resources provided by your organization for performing your job?

Based on the data, satisfaction levels with the digital tools and resources provided by the organization for performing job tasks appear varied. While a portion of respondents (26.43%) express dissatisfaction, a smaller proportion (26.43%) report being very satisfied or satisfied. Moreover, a significant number of respondents (22.14%) remain neutral in their assessment.

How satisfied are you with the digital tools and resources provided by your organization for performing your job?



■ 1. Very satisfied ■ 2. Satisfied ■ 3. Neutral
■ 4. Dissatisfied ■ 5. Very dissatisfied

4. Findings

The conclusions of this research paper are based on a careful examination of secondary data, such as academic literature, industry reports, and case studies. This section provides primary insights into the influence of digital transformation on employee engagement, including positive results and possible dilemmas.

4.1 Positive Impacts of Digital Transformation on Employee Engagement

1. **Increased Communication and Collaboration:** Perhaps the greatest advantage of digital transformation is increased communication and collaboration among staff. The use of digital tools like instant messaging apps, video calling, and project management tools enhances real-time communication and collaboration. In accordance with a research work by Matzler et al. (2014), companies that utilized collaborative technologies had improved levels of employee engagement owing to the growth in interaction and knowledge sharing within team members. Workers feel more connected and engaged when they are able to communicate and collaborate with fellow employees without any limitation by geographical location.

2. **Greater Autonomy and Flexibility:** Digital transformation tends to involve more agile work situations, with workers having more control over their work hours and settings. Brown & Green (2019) suggest through their research that organizations that adopt flexible work arrangements and remote working have increased levels of engagement, since employees value being able to manage their personal and working lives harmoniously. Autonomy supports a feeling of trust and empowerment, which are key aspects of employee engagement.

3. **Learning and Development Opportunities:** Digitalization allows firms to offer employees access to vast learning and development materials. E-learning portals, online training modules, and virtual workshops enable employees to develop their skills and knowledge at their convenience. According to a report by Deloitte (2020), firms who invested in digital learning programs saw a tremendous surge in employee engagement as employees felt empowered for professional growth and development.

4. **Recognition and Feedback Mechanisms:** Digital technologies can make recognition and feedback mechanisms more effective, which is necessary to sustain high employee engagement levels. Real-time feedback and recognition platforms can ensure that employees are recognized and rewarded for their efforts. Gallup (2017) research highlights that frequent recognition and feedback are the major drivers of engagement, and digital transformation can increase these processes as they become more accessible and timely.

4.2 Digital Transformation Challenges

1. **Technological Stress and Overload:** Whereas digital tools have the capability to increase engagement, they also contribute to technological overload and stress for employees. The perpetual volume of information and the need to be constantly connected can generate a sense of anxiety and exhaustion. A research by Hakanen et al. (2017) reported that

staff members who reported being overwhelmed by digital tools also had lower levels of engagement, pointing to the importance of organizations putting in place strategies that foster a good work-life balance and effectively manage digital tool adoption.

2. **Resistance to Change:** Digital change tends to be met with resistance from workers who are reluctant to embrace new technologies or alter entrenched processes. This resistance arises due to fear of the unknown, lack of training, or fear of job loss. A study by Kotter (1996) highlights the need for proper change management techniques to cater to concerns of employees and promote a culture of acceptance and flexibility. Organizations that do not manage this resistance will have lower levels of engagement as employees are unable to relate to the process of change.

3. **Organizational Culture Impact:** Organizational culture directly relates to the success of digital transformation. A resistance-to-change culture can negatively impact efforts to engage, as employees can feel uninfluenced throughout the transformation process. Schein (2010) emphasizes that organizational culture must align with digital transformation efforts so that the employees feel appreciated and engaged. Organizations must actively work to cultivate a culture that embraces innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning to enhance employee engagement during digital transformation.

4.3 Case Studies Illustrating Findings

1. **Case Study: A Multinational Corporation:** A case study of a multinational company that introduced a new digital communication system showed a dramatic rise in employee engagement metrics. Employees said they felt more engaged with their teams and the organization, which resulted in increased collaboration and productivity. Training and support were also offered by the company to get employees on board with the new platform, and this also accounted for the success observed.

2. **Case Study: A Technology Company:** A technology company that implemented agile practices saw a significant boost in employee involvement because of greater autonomy and freedom in the way work was performed. Workers felt more able to make choices and contribute to projects, resulting in greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The leadership within the company actively encouraged an innovative and continuous improvement culture, supporting employee involvement.

5. Discussion

The results of this research paper also underscore the intricate and multidimensional connection between digital transformation and employee engagement. On one hand, digital transformation offers many opportunities for increased engagement, yet on the other, it poses challenges that organizations should address with caution. This discussion section examines the findings, examines their implications, and draws insights on how organizations should best handle the interaction between digital transformation and employee engagement.

5.1 Meaning of Findings

The upbeat effects of digital transformation on employee engagement, as revealed in the findings, highlight the role of technology in fostering a more connected and empowered working population. Improved communication and collaboration tools enable real-time interaction, dissolving silos and creating a sense of community among employees. This resonates with Kahn's (1990) definition of employee engagement, which highlights the significance of social connections in building commitment and involvement.

Additionally, greater autonomy and flexibility that come through digital transformation align with modern workforce demands. As workers continue to pursue work-life balance and flexibility, organizations that use remote working and flexible practices are likely to experience increased levels of engagement. This is especially true in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to faster up-take of remote working practices and a greater need for adaptability within organizational culture.

But the problems presented by digital transformation cannot be ignored. Technological overload and stress are major issues that must be resolved by organizations to ensure continued high levels of engagement. The results indicate that although digital tools can increase productivity, they can produce burnout unless properly managed. Organisations need

to place employee wellness high on their agenda by adopting practices that foster healthy digital work habits, including drawing boundaries around out-of-hours communication and taking frequent breaks.

5.2 The Role of Leadership

The results stress the importance of leadership in spearheading employee engagement during digital change. Leaders who clearly communicate the purposes and advantages of digital plans can mitigate employee fears and create a sense of ownership within the process of change. This is in agreement with the study by Zenger & Folkman (2019), which points towards the significance of supportive leadership in driving engagement.

In addition, leaders need to openly foster a culture of innovation and lifelong learning so that employees feel empowered to meet the changes inflicted by digital transformation. It is crucial to create training and development opportunities in order to enable employees to adopt new technologies and processes. Organizations that invest in employee development are likely to experience increased levels of engagement, as employees feel valued and supported in their career advancement.

5.3 Organizational Culture as a Mediator

The results also highlight the critical role organizational culture plays in bridging the relationship between digital transformation and employee engagement. An organizational culture that supports change, fosters innovation, and embraces employee feedback tends to be more likely to create high levels of engagement. By contrast, a culture that is change-averse can work against attempts at engagement and results in higher turnover.

Organizations have to make a conscious effort to develop a culture that supports their digital transformation agenda. This could mean redefining fundamental values, practicing open communication, and fostering inter-team collaboration. By developing a culture that embraces experimentation and learning, organizations can improve employee engagement and realize successful digital transformation.

5.4 Practical Implications for Organizations

On the basis of findings, some practical implications appear for organizations aiming to increase employee engagement in digital transformation:

1. **Institute Change Management Strategies:** Organizations need to create integrated change management strategies that address concerns and bring employees on board with digital projects. This involves offering transparent communication regarding the purpose and value of digital transformation as well as incorporating employees in the decision-making process.
2. **Prioritize Employee Well-Being:** To avoid the risks of technological overload, organizations must prioritize employee well-being through healthy digital practices and work-life balance. This could include establishing rules for communication outside working hours and resources for managing stress.
3. **Invest in Training and Development:** Firms should invest in training and development activities that help employees develop skills to work with new technologies and processes. This not only increases the level of employee engagement but also helps companies build a more agile and adaptable workforce.
4. **Promote a Culture of Innovation:** Companies need to build a culture that is supportive of innovation and innovation thinking, where employees are encouraged to contribute their ideas and comments. This can be facilitated by frequent brainstorming sessions, challenge-based innovation, and appreciation-based recognition schemes to honor innovative contributions.

5.5 Future Research Directions

Although this study contributes valuable insights about the effects of digital transformation on employee engagement, there remain some opportunities for future research. Long-term studies would examine the long-term consequences of

digital transformation on employee engagement and offer a broader view of how engagement changes over time. In addition, an investigation of how diversity and inclusion impact employee engagement during digital transformation may provide valuable insights into how various demographics of employees perceive and react to changes in technology.

In addition, as new technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning advance, studies should look at their impact on employee engagement. Seeing how these technologies can be used to boost engagement while responding to probable moral issues will be imperative for businesses in the future.

6. Conclusion

The research conducted on the impact of digital transformation on employee engagement reveals a complex interplay between technological advancements and the human elements of organizational culture and leadership. As organizations increasingly adopt digital tools and processes, it is essential to understand how these changes affect employee engagement, which is critical for organizational success.

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This research has found a number of key results on the interaction between digital transformation and employee engagement:

1. **Improved Communication and Collaboration:** Digital transformation makes better communication and collaboration between employees possible, and as a result, employee levels of engagement are improved. The application of digital tools helps create a feeling of community and belonging, which is extremely important for employee productivity and morale.
2. **Greater Autonomy and Flexibility:** The flexibility provided by digital transformation enables employees to have more autonomy over their work settings and time. Such independence is associated with enhanced job satisfaction and engagement since employees have the ability to control their work-life balance.
3. **Learning Opportunity Access:** Digital transformation offers employees access to a range of learning and development opportunities, which make them more efficient and add to their professional development. Organizations that invest in employee development can expect higher levels of engagement and commitment.
4. **Challenges of Technological Overload:** Although technology can foster participation, it can also result in technological overload and stress. Organizations need to be aware of the adverse effects constant connectivity and information overload can have on employee well-being.
5. **The Leadership and Culture Role:** Strong leadership and an innovation-friendly organizational culture play a central role in facilitating the relationship between digital transformation and employee engagement. Transparently communicating leaders and innovation cultures can make a significant difference in driving employee engagement in times of change.

6.2 Organizational Recommendations

According to the findings, some of the following recommendations can be drawn for organizations that would like to increase employee engagement during digital transformation:

- **Establish Thorough Change Management Plans:** Organizations must adopt systematic change management plans that entitle employees to clear communication, involvement, and support during the process of digital transformation. This will aid in suppressing resistance and creating a sense of ownership among workers.
- **Facilitate Employee Well-Being:** To prevent technological overload challenges, companies must focus on employee well-being through initiatives that foster healthy digital behaviors and work-life balance. This might involve establishing limits around out-of-hours communication and offering stress management resources.

- **Invest in Training and Development:** Organizations need to invest in training and development initiatives that enable employees with the relevant skills required to deal with new technologies. This is not only an investment in engagement but also in a more capable and nimble workforce.
- **Foster a Culture of Innovation:** Organizations need to make a conscious effort to design a culture that accepts change and fosters employee contribution. By adopting an atmosphere that encourages creativity and risk-taking, organizations can improve employee engagement and deliver effective digital change.

6.3 Future Research Directions

Though this research presents useful findings, it also calls for more investigation in this domain. Subsequent studies may try to undertake longitudinal studies to measure the long-term consequences of digital transformation on employee engagement, as well as the influence of newer technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning. Further investigation of the influence of diversity and inclusion on employee engagement throughout digital transformation might give a more detailed view of how various employee groups undergo these changes.

6.4 Final thoughts

In summary, how digital transformation influences employee engagement is a vital field of research for organizations grappling with the modern workplace complexities. With changing technology, organizations should be keen on how such developments influence their employees. By putting people and organizational culture first, organizations can get the best out of digital transformation, while minimizing its downsides. In the end, a strategic digital transformation approach that takes into account the people side will be needed by organizations that are looking to succeed in a more digital future.

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