**14 - What do HR practitioners do to enhance adoption of digital transformation in their organisation?**

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**Context**

Digital transformation is reshaping the business landscape and organizations are increasingly relying on technology to drive innovation and improve performance. Human Resource Management (HRM) has a crucial role in facilitating this transformation (Van Den Berg et al., 2020). HR practices are essential in fostering innovative behaviour and facilitating the digital transformation process (Nicolás-Agustín et al., 2022). By adopting these practices, organizations can create a culture that encourages employees to embrace digital transformation and actively participate in the change process (Çelebi and Demir, 2022).

As digital transformation imposes new requirements and demands on organisations, HR needs to evolve its services to meet these challenges. This involves recruiting and developing digital talent with the necessary skills and capabilities to drive digital transformation initiatives (Gilch and Sieweke, 2021). HR contributes to digital transformation by ensuring that employees adopt a digital business culture, embrace change, and effectively utilize digital tools (Çelebi and Demir, 2022). In addition, HR needs to support organizational innovation to adapt to digital transformation. This involves creating an environment that encourages creativity and innovation, as well as providing training and development opportunities to enhance employees' digital skills (Parsehyan, 2020). HR also plays a role in digital transformation by reengineering HR processes to support redesigning business efficiency and processes. This includes re-evaluating job roles, skills requirements, and performance management systems to align with the digital transformation goals of the organization (Hu and Zhu, 2021).

***Aim***: This research investigation is conducted to support HR practitioner in developing their impact in the implementation of digital transformation in the workplace.

***Research Question***: What do HR practitioners do to enhance the adoption of digital transformation in their organisation?

***Research Objectives***

* Analyse Human Resource Management’s role in digital transformation.
* Examine how the Human Resources Management function will evolve to support digital transformation.
* Explore HRP’s strategies and approaches to the adoption of DT in their organisation
* Develop a practice framework that supports HR practitioner in developing their impact in the implementation of digital transformation in the workplace.

**Literature Review**

The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) defines digital transformation as the organisation and its people’s ability to adopt to rapid change caused by technology and to continue to do so as technology evolves (CIPD and Personio, 2021). The term Digital Maturity refers to the alignment of an organisation's people, culture, structure, and tasks to become fully fluid in its ability to take advantage of technological opportunities. Kane stresses the importance of the relationship between digital transformation and digital maturity as digital disruption will not end anytime soon as many more waves are coming (Kane et al., 2019).

Digital transformation can only be considered a success when employees are fully engaged and committed to the organisation’s transformation and strategic direction, not when new digital technologies have been implemented (Florek-Paszkowska et al., 2021), still, digital transformation initiatives have a high tendency to fail (Pacolli, 2022). In order to increase the likelihood of success, transformation must focus on the people involved, this focus has been a blind spot for digital transformation efforts. Attention to organisational culture, the technologies, employees’ resistance to adaptation, and the overall integration processes is not a straightforward change management initiative. (Pacolli, 2022). It is more important than ever that HRM is involved in the implementation of digital transformation and organisational transformation as it is becoming more important that employees are aligned with the change and the strategic needs of the organisation in this new digital era (Fenech et al., 2019).

According to the CIPD’s report ‘Digital transformation in organisations and people functions’, regarding the future of work, HR’s ability to support and implement digital transformation is critical for organisational success. For the HR professional, digital transformation is more about helping employees adopt and accept the coming changes in the world of work then it is about the technology itself. It is about helping to shape strategy and culture whilst helping reduce anxiety and resistance to change (CIPD and Personio, 2021).

Digital transformation will require both a change in human behaviours and how organisations restructure themselves as they adopt to change. Regarding this change, Jabil (an American global manufacturing company) found that 74% of organisations felt that the biggest challenge will be culturally related and 26% were concerned about the technological change (Genzorova et al., 2019). Digital transformation will directly impact three areas of organisational life, the transformation of customer service, operational processes and overall business models. HR practitioners have a unique opportunity to help managers and employees adapt to new digital technologies and changes, whilst transforming their role and impact in both the day-to-day adaptation and engagement in strategic priorities of their organisation (Mitrofanova et al., 2019).

Change management approaches that focus on positive support for employees and intentional management of the transformation process are crucial for successful implementation (Dudezert et al., 2023). This highlights the importance of considering the impact of digital workplace transformations on employees' task, social, and well-being perceptions. In a digitally transformed organization, HR practitioners need to possess key competencies to effectively navigate the changes brought about by digital transformation (Van Den Berg et al., 2020). HR managers need to develop digital flexibility to adapt to the rapid development of technologies and the new digital reality in HRM (Kapitanov et al., 2021). Aligned HR competencies are essential in the context of digital transformation As organizations undergo digital transformation, HR practitioners need to develop competencies that align with the changing needs of the organization. This includes skills in areas such as data analytics, digital HR tools, and change management (Van Den Berg et al., 2020).

**Philosophical Approach**

The research project is being undertaken to explore what Human Resource Practitioners do to enhance adoption of digital technologies for digital transformation. It is therefore concerned with how practitioners understand and interpret their experiences. What the practitioner believes works and why that is so, is critical to understanding their behaviours in their contribution in the implementation of digital transformation. As the research is exploring individual meaning and contribution (Alharahsheh and Pius 2020) the research is adopting an Interpretive philosophy.

**Methods**

A qualitative approach incorporating semi-structured interviews will explore the research question through the eyes of practitioners who have successfully implemented digital ‘transformation’. It is hoped that their experiences will help other HR practitioners by contributing good practice whilst building a persuasive argument for the utilisation of the profession expertise in this area.

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