

The Impact of ICT on Employment Relations: Unearthing the Workplace Role of Communication Technology

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ABSTRACT

Developments in technologies have changed how enterprises and employees work and that there is a need to establish new ways in which the employment relationship could be managed. The central purpose of this study is to investigate how forms of communication technology have altered how enterprises and employees work, as well as justify the need to establish new ways of managing the employment relationship. Findings demonstrate that for enterprise leaders, some of the strategies that might assure future competitiveness and survival include building organisation culture in ways that support digital operations, treating employees like customers – to curate and create digital experiences for the workforces, and being open to innovation – to stay ahead of the competition.

Keywords: ICT altered how enterprises and employees work. To establish new ways of managing the employment relationship.

INTRODUCTION

With increased reliance and rapid advancement in technology, one of the highly salient questions that continue to attract scholarly interest is how it has changed the way people work. According to Berkery, Morley and Tiernan *et al.* (2017), the current world has seen technology alter how businesses capture and create value, as well as where and how people work, communicate, and interact. Fleming (2017) observed further that some of the leading technologies with which significant transformations are associated in the business world include clean-energy technologies, mobile and cloud computing, intelligent manufacturing and sensors, machine learning and big data, and drones and advanced robots. Similar to the assertion by Frey and Osborne (2017), the study indicated that these technologies have stretched beyond the ability to help individuals to improve in performance and complete tasks faster and provided room for significant changes in how the tasks are accomplished.

It is also worth noting that currently, there is ubiquitous Internet connectivity, increased computing power for enterprises and consumers, and growth in technological capabilities and that these digital advances have altered how enterprises and employees work (Higgins, 2017). Through increased workplace digitisation, some of the beneficial effects that have been

documented include increased adaptability and flexibility, a more agile and mobile workforce, cost savings, and increased productivity (Holland and Bardoel, 2016). Also, technological advances imply that most enterprises have collaborated globally, gaining a more global and diverse staff. For most employers, this trend has been a boom. However, Jesuthasan (2017) cautioned that technology has also altered the power balance in relation to the relationship between employers and employees, with the power shifting mostly towards employers. Also, MacCrory, Westerman and Alhammadi *et al.* (2014) observed that with the technology translating into employees' ability to stay connected and work from anywhere via tablets, Smartphones, and other mobile devices, they (the employees) have ended up collaborating and staying connected with other team members and also kept abreast of digital trends.

However, the new digital workplace has also come with challenges. According to Makridakis (2017), some of these challenges include retention problems and burnout (due to the demand for team members to be "on"), expectations of new etiquette on the employees' side, and security problems. Overall, integrations of technologies into enterprises have changed employee productivity and also led to a new or distinct culture, having altered the general work experience and previous work culture.

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Furthermore, the changes have challenged enterprises by requiring most of the employees and executives to adapt to how they interact, as well as how they accommodate new technologies through which they accomplish tasks. Hence, it is worth concurring and agreeable that developments in technologies have changed how enterprises and employees work and that there is a need to establish new ways in which the employment relationship could be managed. The central purpose of this study is to investigate how forms of communication technology have altered how enterprises and employees work, as well as justify the need to establish new ways of managing the employment relationship.

METHODOLOGY

This study collects and analyzes data using secondary sources. Regarding data presentation, the study relies on graphical illustrations depicting how the ICT phenomenon is shaping workplace operations in contemporary society. To analyze the data, the study employs a content analysis approach in which inferences are made regarding different investigations that have contributes to and reported mixed outcomes regarding the subject under investigation. To ensure ethical conformity, the study collects and analyzes data in its original form without the researcher's interferences, intervention, or manipulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

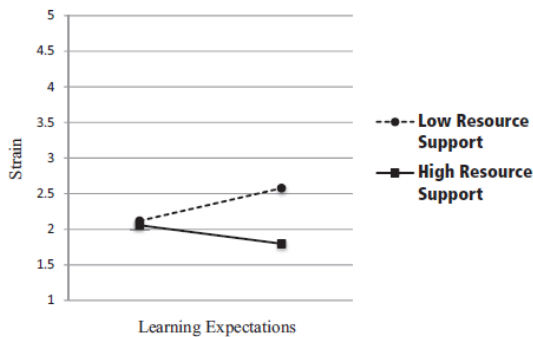


Figure 1: How resource support affects the ICT impact on workplace strain

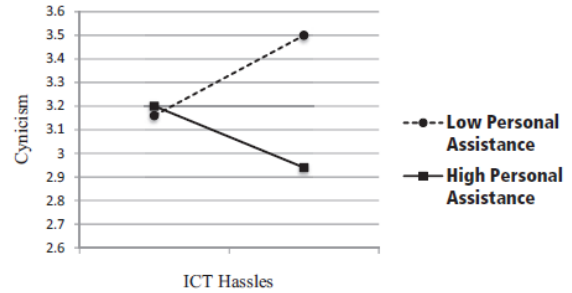


Figure 2: The impact on personal assistance on how ICT shapes employee cynicism

With the growth in the storage and speed of computing, social media and the app economy have made global and virtual collaboration possible. With social networks and technologies becoming more robust, Marler and Parry (2016) observed that there is a continued increase in the computing power at the consumer hardware's disposal. The eventuality is that most of the employees have resorted to and preferred working comfortably with their devices, a trend that has reduced face-to-face meetings. According to Marlow, Lacerenza and Salas (2017), the trickle-down effect is that an increasing number of employers have experienced a boom of a more digital-savvy team. Therefore, social media and the app economy have transformed the contemporary workplace whereby they have supported digitally integrated employee groups and in turn, allowed organisations to gain dispersed teams logistically. Also, social media and the app economy have expanded organisations' access to global worker networks rapidly, especially due to their ability to connect the workforces by voice and data (Morgan, 2016). As such, these technological provisions imply that in the current world, teams across countries and time zones could work remotely and remain connected to other team members via platforms such as cloud-stored files, email, VoIP, and Skype. Hence, these platforms suggest that through social media and the app economy, enterprises do not necessarily have to send their employees on airplane rides to attend to client groups or link up with other team members in other companies in the same or different industries. Instead, the technologies' associated social and technical mobility have decoupled organisations and workforces from define markets and physical geography. According to Parry and Battista (2015), this trend is evident in the US, whereby between 30 percent and 40 percent of employees are contingent and that

most of the “on-demand” teams that organisations have created are digitally integrated. As such, it can be inferred that it is through social media and the app economy that many enterprises have an opportunity to tap into extensive networks that include seasoned professionals, technical experts, and innovators; hence, agility. However, Yli-Huumo, Ko and Choi *et al.* (2016) documented that similar to the IT platform, social media, and app economy incorporation into organisation activities could imply that some employees might lose their jobs to machines. For enterprises, Schlacter, Mcdowall and Cropley *et al.* (2018) stated that these technologies call for a workplace shift in a manner that involves redesigning jobs to incorporate the new technology solutions without necessarily replacing the staff. The implication for the future is that the HR department and other affected leadership teams will need to integrate both people and smart machines (responsible for driving social media platforms and the app economy) into their networks of talents (PwC, 2017).

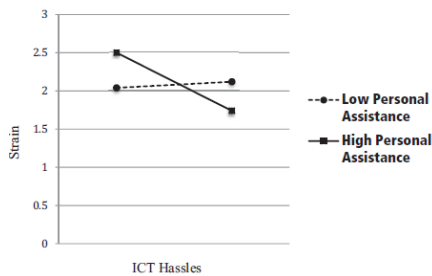


Figure 3: How personal assistance affects strain and ICT hassles in the workplace

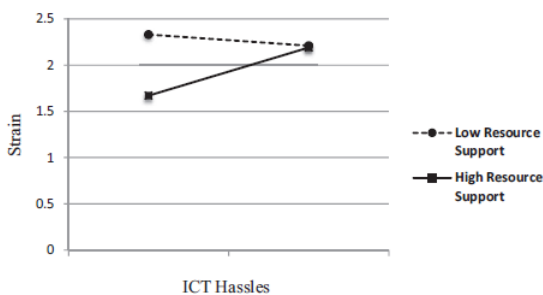


Figure 4: How resource support shapes ICT hassle and strain relationship in the workplace

With social media and the app economy also yielding a digital workforce, there has been increased virtual connectedness and communication, and that enterprises have been

exposed to new ways through which they acquire, develop, and manage work and talent. In the recent past, Waber, Magnolfi and Lindsay (2018) observed that through social media and the app economy, several open-source and freelance ideas, products, and talent marketplaces have evolved. For employers and companies, analytics from these trends imply that the culture around working and work has changed significantly, especially with most of the mobile, connected, and younger workers managing their careers independently. In relation to the need to change to establish new ways through which employment relationships could be managed, the eventuality is that in the future, it will be imperative for enterprise leaders to support a digital culture, especially by adopting social and digital strategies that would facilitate workers with digital tools that might provide the needed flexibility.

CONCLUSION

In summary, it is worth concurring and agreeable that developments in technologies have changed how enterprises and employees work and that there is a need to establish new ways in which the employment relationship could be managed. Two categories of notable technologies that account for this transformation include HR and IT operations, and social media and the app, and gig economy. For enterprise leaders, some of the strategies that might assure future competitiveness and survival include building organisation culture in ways that support digital operations, treating employees like customers – to curate and create digital experiences for the workforces, and being open to innovation – to stay ahead of the competition.

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