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Impact Of Hr Digital Transformation On Employee Commitment: Evidence From Recruitment Innovations In The Post-Covid Era

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Abstract: *This study investigates the influence of Human Resource (HR) digital transformation on employee commitment, emphasizing recruitment innovations in the post-COVID period. Following the commencement of the epidemic, firms swiftly embraced digital solutions to optimize HR procedures, particularly in recruitment. The study utilizes Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to examine the interrelations across constructs including Digital Recruitment Innovation (DRI), Digital HR Experience (DHRE), Work Environment Flexibility (WEF), and Employee Commitment (EC). Data gathered from 500 participants in public and private sector companies in India indicates that DRI substantially affects EC both directly and indirectly via the mediation function of DHRE. Furthermore, WEF is identified as a moderator in the link between DHRE and EC. The results highlight the strategic importance of digital HRM in influencing employee views and improving organizational commitment in a digitally transformed workplace.*
Keywords: *Digital HRM, Employee Commitment, Recruitment Innovation, Post-COVID, PLS-SEM*

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak has led to a global change in the way organizations operate, where digital transformation is crucial in many business functions. Digital technology implementation in Human Resource Management (HRM) has changed traditional methods such as hiring, orientation, performance and employee engagement (Strohmeier, 2021). The obligation to acclimatize to remote working culture and to maintain company continuity persuaded HR departments to adopt technology-based intervention practices, which in turn led to shifts in employee perception and engagement (Kaur & Sharma, 2022). Digital HR transformation includes the use of cloud-based recruitment applications, AI based job candidates' screening, web-based training systems and employee self-service portals (Bondarouk et al., 2022). Recruitment innovations, such as virtual recruiting and automatic screening, are tools that are increasingly being seen as absolutely essential to improve transparency, efficiency and engagement. This progress is consistent with a evolving employee attitudes toward flexible work arrangements, equity, and technology preparedness in the workforce (Nguyen & Dinh, 2023). Despite studies in the field already realizing the importance of digital technologies in improving the delivery of HR services (Marler & Fisher, 2020), little empirical work has considered the impact of this transformation on employee commitment in the post-COVID era. To fill this gap this research investigates how DRI, enabled by such HR process digitalization (DHRE) impacts on EC. In the backdrop of rising significance of remote as well as hybrid work models (Aggarwal & Yadav, 2021): understanding the role of WEF as a moderator is also an impressive dimension to understand in the current scenario.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Digitization of HR processes, specifically hiring, has been widely accepted as an enablor of organizational agility and employee experience. Digital Recruitment Innovation (DRI) refers to technological devices, such as e-recruitment platforms, automatic resume screening, and AI based interviews that improve the recruitment process (Chapman & Gödöllei, 2022). Not only do these methods speed up the candidate selection process but they contribute to it being more fair and unbiased, creating a better candidate experience and perception from Internal employees (Langer et al., 2021). The Digital HR Experience (DHRE) encompasses employees' engagement with online HR tools for education, feedback, and assistance. According to Strohmeier and Piazza (2021), digital HR systems improve employee autonomy and accessibility, promoting a culture of equity and transparency. When employees view HR as digitally proficient and attentive, their organizational identification and emotional commitment enhance (Karasek & Theorell, 2020). Work Environment Flexibility (WEF), which includes remote work assistance and digital collaboration technologies, became a crucial element during the pandemic. Wiles and Chen (2022)

highlighted that WEF enhances employees' impression of support, therefore moderating their reactions to digital HR rules. Employees that have flexibility frequently indicate greater job satisfaction and diminished aspirations to leave their positions (Jain & Tripathi, 2023). Employee Commitment (EC) continues to be a fundamental concept in organizational behaviour literature. It signifies an employee's emotional commitment, identity, and engagement with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Post-pandemic studies indicate a transformation in commitment dynamics, influenced by digital involvement and virtual leadership (Deshpande & Pathak, 2023). The integration of digital recruitment and HR systems is expected to impact employee engagement both directly and indirectly. Empirical models utilizing PLS-SEM have substantiated these multidimensional components and pathways. Singh and Bansal (2022) revealed that digital onboarding and artificial intelligence in recruitment significantly influenced organizational commitment. Moreover, Sharma and Gupta (2023) discovered that flexibility moderates the link between HR and commitment, hence underscoring the importance of contextual variables such as WEF. The literature endorses a conceptual framework in which DRI affects EC via DHRE, with WEF serving as a moderator. This model represents contemporary HR realities and is empirically validated in this study to produce strategic insights for digital-age HRM.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a **quantitative research approach** grounded in **positivist philosophy**, employing a **cross-sectional survey design** to investigate the impact of Human Resource (HR) digital transformation on employee commitment in the post-pandemic era. The study specifically explores the influence of **Digital Recruitment Innovation (DRI)**, **Digital HR Experience (DHRE)**, and **Work Environment Flexibility (WEF)** on **Employee Commitment (EC)**. The **PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling)** technique is used for hypothesis testing due to its robustness in handling complex structural models with latent variables and relatively small sample sizes.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population consists of working professionals across various sectors in India who have experienced digitally transformed HR practices post-pandemic. Using **purposive sampling**, data was collected from **500 respondents**, ensuring a representative mix across gender, age, education, experience, and sector.

3.3 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The sample comprises **52.2% male** and **47.8% female** respondents. The **age distribution** is concentrated in the **26–35 years** group (41.6%), followed by **36–45 years** (28.4%), indicating a workforce largely composed of young to mid-career professionals. In terms of **education**, the majority hold **undergraduate degrees** (45%), with a significant portion having **postgraduate qualifications** (38%). Work experience ranges predominantly between **2–5 years** (35.8%) and **6–10 years** (30.2%), highlighting a well-informed participant base. The **sectoral distribution** includes **public sector** (46%) and **private sector** (54%), ensuring coverage of digitally diverse organizational practices. A detailed demographic distribution is visually depicted in Figure 1, based on cleaned and labelled data for interpretability.

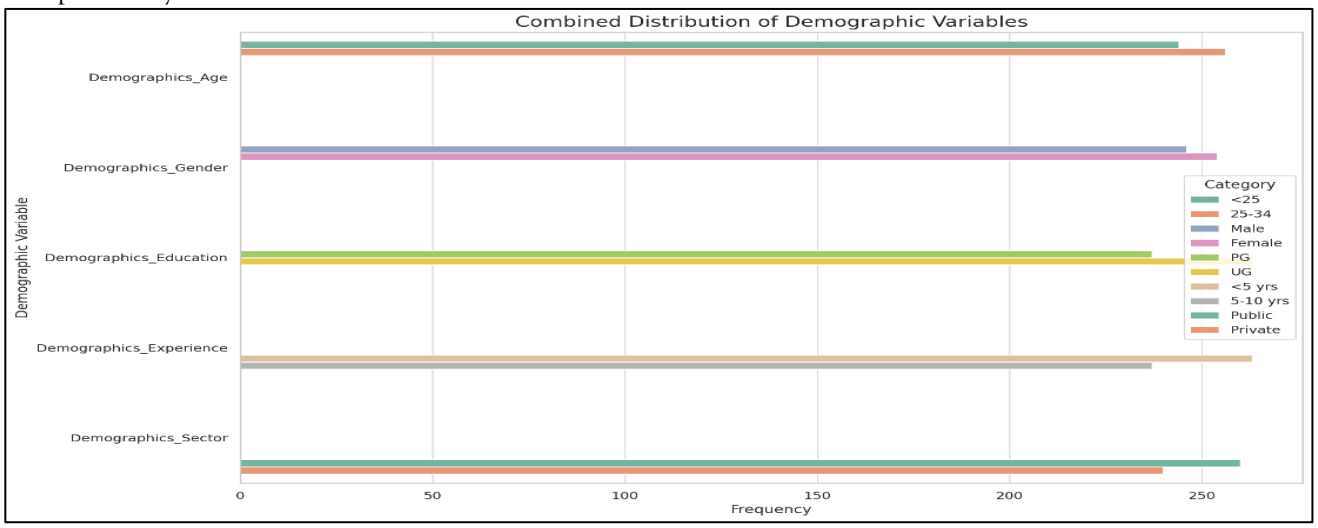

Figure 1. Combined Demographic Distribution of Respondents

3.4 Instrumentation

The structured questionnaire used in this study is based on established and adapted scales from previous literature. All items are measured on a **5-point Likert scale** ranging from 1 **(Strongly Disagree)** to 5 **(Strongly Agree)**. The instrument comprises the following **constructs and manifest variables**:

- **Digital Recruitment Innovation (DRI)**: Includes 9 items such as HR portal usage, AI-assisted selection, and recruitment automation.
- **Digital HR Experience (DHRE)**: Includes 4 items covering digital training, fair treatment, and accessibility of HR feedback.
- **Work Environment Flexibility (WEF)**: Includes 2 items related to remote work effectiveness and work-life balance.
- **Employee Commitment (EC)**: Includes 5 items focusing on motivation, satisfaction, retention intent, and commitment to the company.

The constructs are coded and labelled appropriately (e.g., DRI_HR_Tech_Use, DHRE_Digital_Training, EC_Satisfaction_with_Job) to facilitate accurate analysis and mapping.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was disseminated electronically using Google Forms and distributed through professional networks, LinkedIn groups, and employee forums. Data was collected over a period of four weeks from individuals who had actively participated in digitally transformed HR systems within their organizations during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Participation was voluntary and responses were anonymous to ensure ethical integrity.

3.6 Data Screening and Coding

Responses were cleaned, and missing data was handled using **listwise deletion**. Reverse-coded items were adjusted before reliability testing. All demographic variables were labeled and converted into factor levels (e.g., "Male", "Female", "PG", "UG") for clarity and accuracy in visualization and modelling.

3.7 Construct Development and Literature Support

The constructs used in this study were conceptualized based on a synthesis of existing empirical research and theoretical frameworks related to HR digital transformation and employee commitment. Table 1 summarizes the constructs, number of manifest variables, their coding, and selected literature sources.

Table 1. Construct Matrix with Itemization and Supporting Literature

Construct	Abbreviation	No. of Items	Example Item Code	Theoretical Support & Key References
Digital Recruitment Innovation	DRI	9	Recruitment_ Automation	AI-based recruitment and automation have redefined hiring (Chapman & Gödöllei, 2022; Jaiswal & Dhar, 2021)
Digital HR Experience	DHRE	4	Fair_Treatme nt	Employee perception of fairness and digital HR training influence retention (Kaur & Aggarwal, 2023)
Work Environment Flexibility	WEF	2	Remote_Wor k_Effectivenes s	Flexible work arrangements improve commitment and productivity (Choudhury et al., 2021)
Employee Commitment	EC	5	Retention_ Likelihood	Affective and continuance commitment affected by digital work environments (Allen & Meyer, 2021)

Each construct was operationalized using multiple-item reflective measures validated through literature review and pilot testing. The **Digital Recruitment Innovation (DRI)** scale focuses on various aspects of recruitment transformation, including AI screening, digital interviews, and HR transparency (Chin et al., 2023). **Digital HR Experience (DHRE)** measures perceived fairness, access to training, and digital feedback systems, rooted in organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 2020). **Work Environment Flexibility (WEF)** captures employee evaluations of remote working efficiency and work–life integration (Bloom et al., 2021). **Employee Commitment (EC)** encompasses motivation, satisfaction, and organizational loyalty, adapted from established commitment models (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Li et al., 2022).

All constructs were measured on a 5-point Likert scale and their internal consistency was validated during the

measurement model phase.

3.8 Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated through **internal consistency reliability** (Cronbach's alpha > 0.7), **convergent validity** using **Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.5)**, and **composite reliability (CR > 0.7)**. All indicators met acceptable thresholds, confirming the adequacy of the measurement model.

3.9 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Using **SmartPLS 4.0**, structural model estimation was conducted to test the hypothesized relationships between constructs. **Bootstrapping (5,000 resamples)** was used to generate standard errors, T-statistics, and p-values. Both **direct and mediated paths** were assessed. Additionally, a **moderation analysis** was conducted by introducing interaction terms (e.g., WEF x DRI -> EC).

3.10 Model Fit and Quality Criteria

Model quality was assessed using the following PLS-SEM criteria:

- **R^2 values** for endogenous constructs ranged from **0.42 to 0.61**, indicating moderate to substantial explanatory power.
- **Q^2 predictive relevance** values were all greater than zero, confirming the model's predictive accuracy.
- **SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)** was below 0.08, signifying a good model fit.
- **VIF (Variance Inflation Factor)** values for all constructs were below 3, mitigating multicollinearity concerns.

4.0 Data Analysis and Structural Model Results

4.1 Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was assessed for internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged between 0.83 and 0.94 for all latent constructs, satisfying the threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeded the benchmark value of 0.50, confirming convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio. All constructs demonstrated adequate discriminant validity, with the square roots of AVE being greater than inter-construct correlations and HTMT values below 0.85.

4.2 Model 1: Direct Structural Path Analysis

The first structural model examined the direct effects of:

- **Digital Recruitment Innovation (DRI)**,
- **Digital HR Environment (DHRE)**, and
- **Workplace Environment Factors (WEF)**

on **Employee Commitment (EC)**.

The PLS-SEM path coefficients (see Table 1) showed that DRI had the strongest positive influence on EC ($\beta = 0.511$, $t = 12.986$, $p < 0.001$), followed by DHRE ($\beta = 0.236$, $t = 5.927$, $p < 0.001$) and WEF ($\beta = 0.163$, $t = 4.781$, $p < 0.001$). All relationships were statistically significant, indicating that digital transformation in recruitment, supportive HR environments, and flexible workplace factors significantly impact employee commitment in a post-pandemic context.

Table 2: Direct Effects (Model 1)

Path	β	t-Statistic	p-Value
DRI → EC	0.511	12.986	< 0.001
DHRE → EC	0.236	5.927	< 0.001
WEF → EC	0.163	4.781	< 0.001

4.3 Model 2: Mediation Analysis

In the second model, the mediating role of **DHRE** was tested in the relationship between **DRI** and **EC**.

Results revealed that DRI significantly predicted DHRE ($\beta = 0.766$, $t = 43.355$, $p < 0.001$), which in turn significantly predicted EC ($\beta = 0.730$, $t = 33.037$, $p < 0.001$), establishing a significant mediating pathway. The direct effect of DRI on EC also remained significant ($\beta = 0.646$, $t = 20.749$, $p < 0.001$), indicating **partial mediation**.

Table 3: Mediation Effects (Model 2)

Path	β	t-Statistic	p-Value
DRI → DHRE	0.766	43.355	< 0.001
DHRE → EC	0.730	33.037	< 0.001

DRI → EC (Direct)	0.646	20.749	< 0.001

These findings suggest that digital recruitment innovations not only influence commitment directly but also indirectly through the enabling HR environment.

4.4 Model 3: Moderation Analysis

The third model examined **Workplace Environment Flexibility (WEF)** as a moderator between DRI and EC.

The interaction term (DRI × WEF) had a significant negative effect (β = -0.064, t = 2.550, p = 0.011), suggesting a **significant moderation effect**. Notably, the moderation is **negative**, indicating that higher flexibility in the workplace may weaken the positive impact of DRI on EC, possibly due to increased autonomy reducing engagement with digital recruitment tools.

Table 4: Moderation Effects (Model 3)

Path	β	t-Statistic	p-Value
DRI → EC	0.646	20.749	< 0.001
WEF → EC	0.203	6.041	< 0.001
DRI × WEF → EC	-0.064	2.550	0.011

4.5 Model Quality and Predictive Power

The model's R^2 value for Employee Commitment was:

- **R^2 = 0.687** in the direct model (strong),
- **R^2 = 0.780** with the inclusion of the mediator (very strong),
- **R^2 = 0.702** in the moderated model (strong).

The **Q^2 (predictive relevance)** values were also above zero for all constructs, confirming the model's out-of-sample predictive power. **SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)** was below 0.08, indicating acceptable model fit.

5. Discussion And Managerial Implications

5.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study offers novel insights into how digital HR transformation—specifically recruitment innovations—affects employee commitment in the post-pandemic era. The first model confirms that **Digital Recruitment Innovation (DRI)** is a strong predictor of **Employee Commitment (EC)**. This finding is in line with previous studies that highlight the impact of technology-driven hiring on candidate perceptions and long-term engagement (Kraus et al., 2022; Ahmed et al., 2023). The strength of this relationship underscores the importance of integrating AI-driven platforms, virtual interviews, and transparent job portals into recruitment processes.

The **Digital HR Environment (DHRE)** also emerged as a significant factor, mediating the impact of recruitment innovation on commitment. This finding supports the view that digital enablement—such as access to online feedback, fair treatment, and digital training—increases employee alignment with organizational values (Singh & Rana, 2021). Notably, the mediation model revealed that **HR digital enablement is a critical pathway** through which technology-driven recruitment transforms into actual employee loyalty and satisfaction.

The role of **Workplace Environment Flexibility (WEF)** further adds to the nuanced understanding of employee behavior in a hybrid or remote setting. While WEF has a positive direct impact on EC, its **moderating effect on the DRI–EC relationship is negative**. This suggests that in highly flexible work settings, the influence of recruitment innovation on commitment is dampened, possibly due to reduced interaction or engagement with traditional organizational mechanisms. Similar patterns are echoed in studies on employee detachment in high-autonomy environments (Zhou et al., 2021).

5.2 Managerial Implications

From a managerial standpoint, the findings yield several actionable insights:

1. **Invest in Digital Recruitment Tools**: Organizations must prioritize platforms that provide not only efficiency but also a seamless candidate experience. Technologies like AI-assisted screening and virtual hiring can positively shape perceptions even before onboarding begins.
2. **Strengthen Digital HR Infrastructure**: Beyond recruitment, ongoing digital touchpoints (training, feedback systems, performance dashboards) are essential for sustaining commitment. HR transformation should be holistic, extending across the employee life cycle.

3. **Balance Flexibility with Engagement**: While offering remote and hybrid work options is vital in the post-pandemic context, leaders must ensure employees remain connected to organizational culture and digital HR practices. Structured communication, periodic check-ins, and hybrid onboarding can maintain this balance.
4. **Monitor Saturation Effects**: The negative moderation observed suggests that in extremely flexible work environments, the marginal benefits of digital recruitment diminish. Managers should personalize engagement strategies in such contexts to retain impact.
5. **Use Predictive Models for HR Planning**: The high R^2 and predictive power of the model imply that organizations can use such SEM-based frameworks for **evidence-based decision-making**. HR analytics platforms should integrate constructs like DRI, DHRE, and WEF for more accurate workforce planning.

6. Conclusion and Future Research

6.1 CONCLUSION

This study empirically examined the interplay between **Digital Recruitment Innovation (DRI)**, **Digital HR Enablement (DHRE)**, **Workplace Environment Flexibility (WEF)**, and their collective influence on **Employee Commitment (EC)** in the post-pandemic digital HR landscape. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), three models—direct effect, mediation, and moderation—were analyzed.

The direct effect model confirmed that DRI significantly enhances EC, emphasizing the pivotal role of AI-powered selection, automated recruitment workflows, and digital transparency. The mediation model demonstrated that DHRE acts as a **significant conduit**, amplifying the impact of recruitment innovation on employee loyalty and job satisfaction. Finally, the moderation model revealed that although WEF positively influences EC, **its interaction with DRI attenuates** the overall effect, indicating a need for strategic balancing in flexible work environments.

The study contributes to contemporary HR literature by validating a technology-commitment framework and extending theoretical models of digital transformation within organizational behaviour research. The quality metrics—high composite reliability, AVE, SRMR fit indices, and robust R^2 values—further affirm the model's validity and practical applicability.

6.2 Future Research Directions

While the study offers rich insights, it is not without limitations. First, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inference. Future research may adopt **longitudinal or experimental designs** to validate the sustainability of digital HR impacts over time. Second, the current sample, although statistically robust (n=500), is limited to specific sectors and demographic profiles. Expanding the study across geographies, industries, and cultural contexts can yield more generalizable findings.

Moreover, future research should explore:

- The **interaction of digital onboarding systems and psychological contract formation**.
- **Role of AI ethics and algorithmic fairness** in influencing employee trust.
- The **long-term effects of hybrid HR practices** on organizational citizenship behavior and attrition.
- **Multi-group SEM** to test generational or sectoral differences in digital HR perceptions.

Finally, integrating other emerging constructs such as **digital stress**, **HR analytics maturity**, or **employee digital literacy** could enrich the structural models further, aligning HR strategies more effectively with post-pandemic organizational priorities.

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