**Explore the impact of AI/technology on work, working practices and work culture in a post-Covid-19 world**

# Introduction

The impact of COVID-19 has rendered severe changes in the market and operations that typically take place within a business organisation. The Human Resource Management sector of various organisations has also been affected as the rapid growth of technology and Artificial Intelligence have taken over most of the activities. However, consistent debates have emerged in numerous areas regarding the impact of AI and technology on work, practices of work and the culture it promotes in organisations, especially after the impact of the pandemic. The management of human resources has severely changed and organisational management has adopted positive cultures and practices which harness the full potential of the employees and organisational members. As quoted by Andrew Mason, “Hire great people and give them the freedom to be awesome”. Considering the above discussion, this essay is developed to elaborate on my knowledge and understanding of the positive and negative impact of AI and technology on work and working culture and types of working practices changes in the post-COVID-19 pandemic.

# Discussion

## Positive Impact of AI / Technology on Work

The impact of the AI and advanced technologies such as machine learning has been evident in the late twenty-first century as businesses have rapidly incorporated its use in internal operations of the organisation such as practices of work which affect the work and culture. As per the opinions of the rise of the mechanising process was initially introduced in the 16th century for the clothing industry. It was evidenced as a much faster and less expensive process which took place than the standard procedure of the firm. In support of the information the suitors Kousi *et al*. (2019) have further stated that the automobile industry in the twentieth century has been the first to implement robotics in the organisational workforce. Evidence from Fiat has shown that the company marketed its product with the marketing tagline of “handmade by robots” in the market. In this regard, the assembly-line procedures of the production process such as welding jobs and spray painting were replaced by human resources for encouraging a better output of the product. The human element in the assembly line jobs was present to supervise the operations of the machines. The progress of time has also enabled the gradual evolution of AI and technology which have replaced more human resource activities such as windscreens in the context of the automobile manufacturing industries. According to Bragazzi *et al.* (2020), the use of AI and advanced technologies is likely to impact work conducted by organisations to minimise the impact of COVID-19 infections within the workplace while indulging in controlling the costs of the organisation through the push of replacing humans with machines and technology. It is estimated that more than 2 million of the workforces that are existing on a global scale in the manufacturing industry have the potential to be replaced by robotic technologies and AI by 2025. Several researchers have suggested the notion that human resources and work practices in terms of human engagement will be severely impacted due to the elimination of jobs. Evidence such as the usage of AI and robotics technologies in response to the pandemic have led to the easy and fluent performance of work which required technical skills that have been a concern for millennia. Hospitals have utilised robotic technologies such as Sally which specialises in making food items for replacing dining hall employees while shopping malls and stadiums have employed robotic technologies based on AI for ensuring security through patrol of empty real estate. On the other hand, there are considerable arguments in favour of the notion that human workers are unlikely to become obsolete due to the impact of technological growth. It is estimated that technologies such as AI are much more likely to encourage and improve organisational innovation which can breed new jobs that would require new human resource engagement. In such a case, organisational work culture will severely become more innovation-driven as newer opportunities will emerge in the market. Furthermore, market analysis processes which previously required human resource engagement for market trend prediction can be benefitted from the use of AI in terms of determining the market trend and financial auditing can be benefitted technology for detecting misstatements and errors. Even in practices such as Human Resource Management, AI as a technology has the benefit of reducing organisational costs, improving efficiency in service operations and improving coordination. Therefore, I can conclude that the use of AI or technology has signing positive impact on work practices, management of the workers and promotion of innovative working cultures.

## The negative impact of AI/technology on Work

From the information that I have gathered from academic sources and scholarly articles, the indication of the notion that the large-scale integration of AI in workplaces jobs especially in the ones witnessed in the post-pandemic era contributes to job losses is considerable. Reports have revealed that there are significant indications that the implementation of AI and technological infrastructure that integrates AI such as probiotics are likely to impact the human resource of corporate entities specifically the manufacturing industry. This is considerably evident as the human resources do not potentially have the skills of technology and cannot possibly match the levels of productivity and accuracy within the same cost insurance. However, the twenty-first century is a period in which it can be safely assumed that AI and technologies are fairly new due to much larger room for evolution. Therefore, Through my understanding, I can deduce that AI and technologies although has the potential to replace human labour and human resource involvement in organisational processes there are significant processes, it has not developed as technology which can independently carry out the organisational objectives. The reliance on AI technology can therefore impact the productivity of the organisation as human resources excel at dealing with nuances of the organisational problems. It is only the nature of AI and technology to learn and receive training from the humans from which AI operates based on the data gathered from such training and information. However, It is necessary to be argued as per my understanding that the implementation and rapid growth of AI have allowed access to information that AI should be utilised as a tool for aiding human resources and enhancing the entire productivity of human resource management. The case of Uber, a well-renowned cab service company has already attempted to implement the usage of AI technology in cars for integrating machine-run vehicles into the business for eliminating the involvement of human resources and employees from its operations (Hong *et al.* 2021). Furthermore, there are considerable risks in the full-scale implementation of AI and replacing human resources. I have observed while researching the subject and derived that AI lacks the element of transparency and can be potentially biased. The data which is to be derived in the process of feeding the AI for conducting a specific task in the organisational process has the potential to exhibit algorithmic biases if the data itself consists of biases. Unfair outcomes can also be witnessed in the implementation of AI in the Human Resource Management process as the AI’s algorithmic biases can hinder organisational recruitment due to unfair and biased delivery of results towards a specific protected community or class while eliminating genuine candidates that are more deserving based on qualifications and knowledge (Akter *et al*. 2021). Therefore, I can draw a conclusion from the above discussion that AI technology has not yet evolved to a degree to be fully replacing human resources and undertake the roles and duties within the organisation but can be utilised as a tool for human resources to not only meet the organisational objectives but also increase in efficiency and productivity.

## Types of working practices in the post-COVID-19 World

From the research and development of the present essay, I have understood that the impact of COVID-19 has been considered which has brought forward unprecedented challenges to human and humanitarian factors. I have witnessed numerous organisations implement swift responses in terms of adopting new methods for safeguarding human resources and operations for the purpose of migrating to new methods for maintaining consistency. One of the core changes in the working practices in human resource management is the shifting of the operations of human resources by introducing a flexible working model. Employees after the pandemic prevalence have been aware of the benefit and comfort of their residents while producing output for the companies. Reports have revealed that organisations in the post-pandemic period in the region of America have engaged in 62 per cent recruitment of human resources to be working from home in times of crisis. In comparison, the percentage of the same was only 25 per cent prior to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Technology has played a vital role in the process of communication and business operations such as videoconferencing along with other relevant digital forms of collaboration which were considerably adopted during the period. I have also gained an understanding from research conducted on the subject which has stated that 80 per cent are enjoying and have adapted to the working model. On the other hand, 41 per cent of the organisational human resources have been reported to be exceptionally productive in the work-from-home model of working while 28 per cent have reported no difference in the level of productivity (Boland *et al.* 2020). Employees and labours have been liberated from the cost and effort of daily commutes to the workplace and have found new easy to utilise the time while establishing a balance between professional and personal lives. The organisations also engage in the encouragement of the mentioned working practices due to the increased access to new pools of talents without having the necessity to bear the constraints of the location while also adopting innovative processes for the purpose of boosting the organisational productivity while also reducing the costs that are associated with real-estates. Reports from the BBC (2023) have also supported the above discussion and found out from the case of Slack that more than 45000 employees have expressed that they do not want to adopt the traditional method of working practices and prefer working from home. It is estimated that only 12% are willing to join the office on a full-time basis while 72% prefer the flexible model of remote working. Thus, from the above discussion, I can conclude that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought changes in the working model and practices of human resources and it is widely accepted and embraced by both organisations and employees across the globe.

## Work culture deviance in the post-COVID-19 World

The working culture has also been affected due to the evidence of changes in the working o practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. As I have discussed earlier that the transition of human resource productivity from within the bounds of the office to remote working from the comfort of the home. It has also been seen that the workers are voluntarily choosing to opt for the remote-based working model. Organisations therefore, as a result, are focusing on a choice base model which empowers the employees in the workspace for determining when and where they deem productive for delivering the productivity that is necessary to fulfil their job roles. As per the opinions of Hitt *et al.* (2021), the impact of covid 0-19 which enabled the willingness to allow working remotely has rendered the organisations also adopted and promote the cultural shift which has brought forward various models such as the one discussed above. Certain organisations have promoted a culture of both full-time office employees and flexible working in the organisation. These organisations have a mix of employees between the category that is working remotely and the ones working for certain hours every week. Scheduled-based working models, on the other hand, are hybrid models which are choreographed days, weeks or even months in certain organisations where management and the employees are scheduled in a certain manner for overlapping to ensure the utmost productivity delivered through the process of coordination within the organisation. From what I have investigated thus far, technology has also majorly contributed to the deviation of the work culture within the organisations in the post-COVID-19 period. Meetings, communicative activities and messages are no longer conducted in the conference room as a part of the traditional culture but through internet-based platforms that are used for video conferencing and online team meetings (Phillips, 2020). The employees feel empowered when and are likely to stay loyal to the organisation in the case of organisations exhibiting the organisational culture of flexibility that are reliant on technology. Therefore, it can be concluded that the work culture deviation has been majorly introduced by the increasing dependence on technology in the post-pandemic period.

# Conclusion

From the present essay, therefore I can finally conclude that there are considerable negative and positive elements in the implementation of technology and AI. However, it is evident that although there are considerable drawbacks to the implementation of technology in work, technology can significantly boost productivity and be effective when utilised as a tool for humans. Working practices have overwhelmingly been reliant on technology as employees prefer remote working models which allow a flexible method of work delivery by ensuring a balance between professional and personal lives. Organisations, on the other hand, save costs and resources by offering employees a remote working model. As a result, the organisational culture has also shifted to a flexible, innovative and technology-based productive culture that fulfils the organisational objective in the post-pandemic period.

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