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Recommended Citation

Abhari, Kaveh and Bekeris, Zigurds, "Employee Experience Management during Digital Transformation: How to Measure the Experiential Values of Digital Transformation" (2020). *ICIS 2020*. 14.
https://aisel.aisnet.org/treos_icis2020/14

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Employee Experience Management during Digital Transformation

How to Measure the Experiential Values of Digital Transformation

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Employees are at the forefront of digital transformation, from executing digital strategies to carrying out digitally-enabled processes. Hence, understanding how employees perceive and experience the value of digital initiatives is critical to the smooth implementation of the proposed changes. Embracing automation and transitioning to a virtual workspace are examples of such changes that require understanding and managing of employees' digital experiences. Therefore, it is increasingly important to model and measure how employees experience the values of digital tools and digitally supported processes. Organizational capability to systematically measure and understand employees' experiences can lead to a more fluid realization of any organizational changes enabled or facilitated by digital technologies.

In this study, we discuss what 'employee experience' encompasses and accordingly propose a way to measure these values in the context of digital transformation. We define experiential values of work—supported by digital technologies—as employees' psycho-cognitive sentiments about the subjective benefits of digitalization. These values stem from the role of digital technologies, for example, in empowering employees, enabling data-driven decision-making, facilitating business processes, optimizing workload, redefining workspace, and connecting employees to each other beyond their business units. These values can be modeled after experience theories and in four dimensions: cognitive values, emotional values, social values, and behavioral values.

Firstly, digital technologies help employees, beyond their routines, with searching for new ideas, learning about new concepts, synthesizing knowledge, and problem-solving. Understanding these cognitive values better equips firms to encourage critical thinking and creative problem-solving by the means of digital technologies. Secondly, digital technologies may help address workspace emotional challenges from high stress and anxiety to lack of trust, joy, or triumph—for example, by decreasing complexity or improving transparency. The insights into these emotional values would allow employers to define more meaningful work routines as part of digital initiatives that effectively satisfy employees' intrinsic needs. Thirdly, social values are created by digital technologies that promote relations, communication, cooperation, and networking among all employees. Tracking social values of digital initiatives can enable organizations to co-govern digital initiatives, accelerate the implementation, improve adoption rate, and boost collaboration among the employees. Fourthly, behavioral values are related to the new activities afforded by new technologies—such as participating in innovation, experimenting with new solutions, voicing opinions, and working virtually. Recognizing behavioral values helps organizations to establish new work routines and reengineer business processes around employee preferences. In sum, while organizations may be interested in the operational value of digital technologies, for employees, it is the experience that matters. Therefore, a key strategy to implement such initiatives is to provide compelling experiences aligned with organizational goals. If firms fail to create these compelling experiences, employees may limit their utilization and therefore hinder the success of digital initiatives.