Assessing Employees Readiness for Digital Transformation a Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The widespread integration of digital technologies into workplaces has highlighted the importance of understanding how employees, rather than just systems, are prepared for transformative digital processes. While the concepts of digital readiness and digital transformation (DT) have been widely studied at the organizational level, assessing how individual employees are ready to succeed in DT initiatives remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by proposing a practical conceptualization and framework of Employee Digital Transformation Readiness (EDTR). To achieve this, a systematic literature review was conducted using the PRISMA protocol, covering peer-reviewed studies from 2010 to 2024. Articles were sourced from Web of Science database, as well as in the most important publishers' databases, resulting in the identification of 22 articles on "e-readiness", 504 articles on "digital transformation", and 178 articles on "digital transformation readiness". The review revealed six key dimensions that shape EDTR namely digital literacy and skills, psychological readiness, behavioral intention, managerial and organizational support, resistance to change, and employee innovativeness. These findings reflect the multidimensional nature of employee readiness and the interplay between personal capabilities and contextual enablers. Based on these insights, the review proposes a comprehensive framework to assess and enhance employee readiness for digital transformation. Additionally, the study offers recommendations for theory development and organizational practices aimed at fostering digital resilience and employee-driven transformation. Although limited by its scope and selection criteria, this review lays the foundation for further empirical validation and broader exploration of how employees contribute to successful DT outcomes in practice.

Keywords: digital transformation; digital transformation readiness; employee digital transformation readiness; digital readiness; systematic literature review

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digital transformation (DT) has gained significant attention in both strategic information systems (IS) research (Bharadwaj et al., 2013; Piccinini et al., 2015) and among industry professionals (Westerman et al., 2011). Generally, DT refers to the substantial societal and industrial shifts driven by the adoption of digital technologies (Agarwal et al., 2010; Majchrzak et al., 2016). Digital transformation (DT) is reshaping organizations across sectors, demanding not only technological innovation but profound shifts in people, processes, and culture (Egodawele et al., 2022). At the organizational level, it is suggested that companies must innovate by developing strategies that respond to the demands of digital transformation and enhance their operational effectiveness (Hess et al., 2016).

In the study of Vial (2021), the author conceptually defined DT as a process aimed at enhancing an organization by inducing substantial changes in its characteristics through the integration of information, computing, communication, and connectivity technologies. DT is also defined as the incorporation of digital technologies through combinations of information, computing, communication, and connectivity technologies within an organization to enhance productivity, efficiency, and sustainability (Petroc, 2024; Vial, 2021). Core transformative technologies in digital transformation include artificial intelligence (AI), big data, block chain, cloud computing, robotics, machine learning and the internet-of-things (IoT) which have introduce across

various industries (Petroc, 2024) in an effort to assist processes to become more efficient, transform user experiences, and magnify innovation performances (Hanelt et al., 2021).

Despite growing investments in DT which estimated at $7.4 trillion globally between 2020 and 2023, success rates still remain low, with McKinsey reporting fewer than 30% of initiatives achieving their intended value (Kumar et al., 2024). These sobering figures underline the need for a deeper focus on the human dimensions of DT, notably the readiness of employees to adapt and thrive. The term "readiness" according to Merriam-Webster is defined as the condition of being prepared; a disposition including willingness and capacity to act (Nasution et al., 2018). Whereas e-readiness originally referred as a macro-level indicator of a society's capability to adapt and respond to the complex challenges posed by the digital economy (Michelotto & Joia, 2024).

Traditionally, DT readiness was treated as an organizational-level construct which assessing infrastructure, strategy, and governance. Early frameworks, such as e-readiness and digital readiness, focussed on macro-level factors like digital infrastructure and national competitiveness (Michelotto & Joia, 2024). However, these metrics overlook the employee-level dimensions such as psychological, behavioural, and cognitive factors that determine whether individuals can effectively leverage digital opportunities. Addressing this gap requires synthesizing diverse constructs such as digital skills, psychological resources, supportive environments, and attitude formation into a coherent, human-centric readiness model.

Existing studies reveal fragmented findings such as digital literacy enhances self-efficacy and positive attitudes toward DT; psychological capital shapes adaptive responses to DT in crisis contexts; managerial support and perceived usefulness mediate acceptance and intention to adopt digital initiatives (Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2022; Cetindamar et al., 2021; Höyng & Lau, 2023, Ling et al., 2023). In line with this, the objective of this study is to study the following research question: What employees need to be ready for DT, that is to say, how the employees' digital transformation readiness can be measured? Thus, to enhance the existing body of knowledge, this article seeks to examine the concept of digital transformation (DT) readiness and introduce a framework for effectively implementing DT initiatives among employees. In doing so, it will explore various definitions, key concepts, and interrelations associated with DT, with particular emphasis on the employee perspective.

BACKGROUND

The foundation of digital transformation

Digital transformation (DT) has emerged as a strategic and cultural imperative for organizations navigating the accelerating pace of technological change in the 21st century. While initially rooted in advances in information and communication technologies (ICT), DT is increasingly conceptualized as a multifaceted organizational process involving deep structural, behavioural, and cognitive shifts that span across technologies, business models, and human capital (Michelotto & Joia, 2024). This foundational transformation challenges traditional operational logics, requiring firms to rethink how they create, deliver, and capture value in digital economies.

The literature presents a wide range of definitions reflecting DT's multidimensional nature (Konopik et al., 2022). Vial (2021) offers one of the most widely accepted conceptualizations, defining DT as "a process that aims to improve an entity by triggering significant changes in its properties through combinations of information, computing, communication, and connectivity technologies." This definition highlights DT as a purposeful organizational shift, supported by the strategic use of digital technologies and capabilities to foster innovation, enhance efficiency, develop new capabilities and transforming customer experiences to create values (Morakanyane et al., 2017; Westerman et al., 2014). From a socio-technical perspective, Michelotto & Joia (2024) argue that DT represents not merely a technological update but a sociocultural evolution which refer to a process of collective learning in which employees and leadership jointly reshape organizational structures and workflows using digital tools. They stress that transformation must be understood as a "complete change" in how organizations operate, interact with stakeholders, and define their value propositions.

DT is often driven by a complex of external pressures such as technological advances, competitive intensity, and changing consumer behaviours. Verhoef et al. (2021) categorize these pressures into three main drivers which were the proliferation of emerging digital technologies (such as AI, IoT, blockchain), the intensification of market competition, and rapidly changing in customer behaviours. These drivers underscore the urgency for organizations to build responsive, agile systems that can continuously adapt to uncertainty such as digitalization. Egodawele et al. (2022), through a comprehensive systematic review, emphasize that DT is inherently disruptive and can radically alter the market logic of entire industries. They assert that successful DT outcomes are typically characterized by reconfigured business models, digitally enabled innovation processes, and a recalibration of organizational identity and capabilities.

A key insight from the reviewed literature is that digital transformation is not solely a technological endeavour, however it is a strategic and cultural shift (Egodawele et al., 2022; Michelotto & Joia, 2024). Kumar et al. (2024) highlighted that DT initiatives often fails when organizations prioritize the adoption of digital tools without sufficiently preparing the people and processes that must sustain them. Their study found that misalignment between top leadership's digital vision and employees' perceptions frequently leads to resistance and low adoption of DT (Kumar et al., 2024). Similarly, Michelotto & Joia (2024) emphasize that DT is a "social construction" which referred as a collective learning process by which organizations redefine norms, values, and routines in response to digital imperatives. Their framework identifies five key dimensions: technological resources, business processes, management capability, human capability, and corporate culture at where all the key dimensions interacting dynamically to enable successful transformation (Michelotto & Joia, 2024). Employees, in particular, play a critical role in executing the transformation strategy and driving its sustainability, as they are the central to the digital maturity of an organization.

Despite the exponential growth of digital transformation (DT) research in recent years, several persistent challenges and gaps still remain especially when it comes to understanding and enabling DT readiness from human-centered perspective. Much of the existing literature still focussing on technological enablers such as big data, artificial intelligence, and infrastructure capabilities, while significantly underexploring organizational and individual-level readiness factors (Bharadwaj et al., 2013; Egodawele et al., 2022; Michelotto & Joia, 2024).

While it is challenging for researchers to establish an unified theory for digital transformation (DT), practitioners also face challenges in developing and sustaining employee readiness within DT initiatives (Gong & Ribiere, 2021). Thus, it is reasonable to realize that a more comprehensive understanding of DT concept particularly from the perspective of the individual employee is still evolving. To fully understanding how DT unfolds within organizations, it is essential not only to evaluate organizational strategies and technological capabilities but also to assess employee-level readiness, either digital readiness, e-readiness, or generally the employees digital transformation readiness. The next section explores these concepts in depth to provide the foundation for developing an integrative framework for assessing employee digital readiness. Next, the methodology used to carried out this research is explained in Section 4. Section 5 presents the findings from the systematic literature review, which serve as the basis for the development and discussion of the employee digital transformation readiness framework in Section 6, along with the corresponding research propositions. Section 7 concludes the study by outlining its theoretical and practical contributions, identifying its limitations, and suggesting directions for future research. Lastly, Appendix A includes the PRISMA flow diagram that guided the systematic review process conducted for this investigation.

E-Readiness: A Macroeconomic and Infrastructural Perspective

The term e-readiness first gained prominence in the late 1990s through initiatives such as the "Readiness Guide for Living in the Networked World" by the Computer Systems Policy Project (CSPP), which aim to measure how well countries were prepared to leverage the internet and ICT infrastructure (Choucri et al., 2003). E-readiness was originally associated with national and sectoral assessments focused on connectivity, regulatory frameworks, digital infrastructure, and institutional capacity (Jutla et al., 2001; Bui et al., 2003).

In its early formulations, e-readiness was defined as "the degree to which a community is prepared to involved in the Digital World" (Đurek & Ređep, 2016), and as "the ability to pursue value creation opportunities

facilitated by the use of the Internet" (Choucri et al., 2003). This readiness is gauged by measuring ICT infrastructure, access, usage, and enabling conditions such as public policy, digital literacy, and trust in technology (Đurek & Ređep, 2016). From an organizational perspective, e-readiness can be interpreted as the ability of a company to integrate ICT tools into its operations, communication channels, and value creation processes (Martín et al., 2012; Santiago, 2014). This includes a firm's capability to use ICT for distributing products and services, enhancing supply chain management, and supporting digital collaboration.

Furthermore, e-readiness has been extended to include individual-level capabilities, particularly in the workplace. This involves the ability of employees to absorb knowledge and understand the benefits of ICTs, thereby acting as facilitators of technology use and innovation (Aboelmaged, 2014; Martín et al., 2012). This micro-level application of e-readiness is especially relevant for organizations undergoing digital transformation, where employee capacity to engage with digital tools becomes a critical factor in overall success (Ríos-Manríquez, 2021). However, scholars also note that e-readiness remains a loosely defined and inconsistently applied concept (Nasution et al., 2018). Nasution et al. (2018) argue that this diversity of definitions offers flexibility across contexts but creates challenges in developing standardized assessment models. The absence of a universally accepted definition complicates comparative research and may obscure differences in digital maturity between sectors, regions, or organizational roles.

Over time, as the digital landscape evolved, scholars began to recognize the limitations of e-readiness frameworks. While these models provided a useful macro-level snapshot, they lacked sensitivity to organizational and individual-level nuances such as culture, training, and employee attitudes (Dada, 2006; Mutula & van Brakel, 2007) . As digital initiatives grew increasingly complex, researchers noted that even in countries or firms with high infrastructure readiness, transformation could falter if the workforce was not psychologically, culturally, or technically prepared (Michelotto & Joia, 2024). This growing awareness encourage a shifting scholarly focus toward readiness at the organizational and individual levels, where e-readiness began to evolve into more significance constructs, signifying not just structural capacity but also human and cultural capability to absorb and thrive in digital change.

Change Readiness: A Behavioural and Psychological Approach

The idea of change readiness emerged from organizational psychology and change management literature. It is defined as the extent to which individuals or groups are cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally prepared to implement and sustain a change effort (Armenakis et al., 1993). Moreover, Holt et al. (2007) defined change readiness as the extent to which an individual or group are cognitively and emotionally prone to accept, embrace, and adopt a specific plan to deliberately alter the existing state of affairs. This definition is supported by Rafferty et al. (2013) at which they proposed that change readiness refers to the extent to which an individual is mentally prepared to accept, embrace, and select a specific plan aimed at intentionally altering the current situations.

Change readiness is a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive readiness which means the belief that change is necessary and achievable, emotional readiness which refers to feelings about change, such as enthusiasm or anxiety, and intentional readiness which means willingness to support or engage in the change process (Bouckenooghe, 2009). This framing aligns closely with the human-centered challenges of digital transformation, particularly at the employee level. In digitally transforming organizations, employee resistance, lack of engagement, or fear of obsolescence can severely limit the success of technology leading change. Therefore, fostering a climate of readiness is not just a managerial concern, it also becomes a psychological and social necessity.

Digital Readiness: An Evolving Construct

The concept of readiness may have originated with Jacobson (1957), and it has been integrated into various theoretical models that explore the process of change (Holt et al., 2007). According to Merriam-Webster, readiness refers to the state of being prepared (Nasution et al., 2018). Similarly, Dictionary.com defines readiness as a developmental stage reflecting an individual's inclination, willingness, and preparedness to engage in an activity (Dolganova & Deeva, 2019). Change readiness theory, which emphasizes the

psychological and organizational preparedness for transformation (Bouckenooghe et al., 2009), provides a foundational framework for understanding digital readiness. Digital readiness is a multifaceted concept with different interpretations across the literature. According to Nasution et al. (2018), digital readiness is a complex and context-dependent construct that can be adapted across multiple levels of analysis, ranging from individual employees to entire industries or nations. This definitional flexibility is both a strength and a limitation, allowing for broad applicability while making standardization of definition more difficult (Nasution et al., 2018; Schallmo et al., 2018).

At the organizational level, digital readiness encompasses seven interrelated dimensions which include resource readiness, cultural readiness, strategic alignment, IT readiness, innovation valence, cognitive readiness, and partnership readiness (Lokuge et al., 2019). De Sousa Jabbour et al. (2018) stress similar principles, emphasizing leadership, digital training, cross-functional work, empowerment, and governance structure as key enablers for digital readiness. However, research by Nasution et al. (2018) and Silva et al. (2022) argues that the individual level should be the focus of digital readiness, since employees translate digital ambitions into everyday tasks.

At the individual level, digital readiness is shaped by both internal dispositions such as perceived usefulness, self-efficacy, and openness to change, and external conditions such as organizational support and training. For example, Gfrerer et al. (2021) found that digital readiness perceptions evolve through communication, training, and empowerment mechanisms, which directly influence employee adoption and innovation behaviours. Similarly, Höyng & Lau's (2023) Employee Digitalization Acceptance Model (EDAM) integrates TAM constructs like perceived ease of use with personal and job resources such as proactive personality and empowering leadership to explain intentional digital readiness among employees

Synthesizing these insights, digital readiness can be understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive components such as digital knowledge and technological literacy; affective components such as self-confidence, digital optimism, and motivation; behavioural components such as intentional actions such as tool adoption, upskilling, and collaboration; contextual enablers such as organizational support, digital culture, and accessible infrastructure. This expanded conceptualization integrates foundational readiness models, behaviour theories, and psychological paradigms to offer a robust framework for assessing employee digital readiness within transformational change processes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a systematic literature review to explore and synthesize the constructs that define and influence employees' digital transformation readiness (EDTR). To ensure methodological rigor and transparency, the review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Protocol (PRISMA) (Arya & Boermeester, 2021), which outlines a four-step process: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion as detailed below.

Identification: In this phase, the research question was refined, and relevant studies were identified using a systematic and comprehensive search strategy. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were predefined to ensure consistency and objectivity in article selection.

Screening: All studies identified in the initial search were screened for relevance. This involved reviewing the titles and abstracts, followed by a full-text review of those that met the basic inclusion criteria.

Eligibility: Full-text articles were evaluated based on their methodological quality and relevance to the research questions. Studies focusing on organizational-level DT without reference to employee-level factors were excluded.

Inclusion: Articles that passed the eligibility criteria were included in the final synthesis. The data extracted from these studies were analysed and the findings are synthesized and reported.

After defining the research questions in the introduction, the literature review began with a targeted search for studies related to employee digital readiness. The data collection occurred between April 2025 and May 2025, and the review covered publications from 2010 to 2024. Articles published in 2025 were excluded from quantitative summaries to maintain year-over-year comparability, although some were reviewed for theoretical relevance.

The initial search focused on scholarly articles published in Web of Science, Scopus, and ScienceDirect, with additional verification from Springer, Emerald, and Taylor & Francis. The review prioritized journals in fields such as Information Systems (IS), Organizational Psychology, Digital Management, and ICT. Only peer-reviewed journal articles in English were included. Books, conference proceedings, editorials, and non-scholarly sources were excluded.

The review process began with a targeted search for key constructs in the Web of Science database. To ensure precision, quotation marks were used to capture exact matches of terms such as “digital transformation,” “e-readiness,” “digital readiness,” and “digital transformation readiness.” These terms were searched within the title, abstract, and keyword fields to analyse and compare publication trends over time. Although the search initially included all articles referencing “digital transformation,” due to the large volume and broad scope of this term, subsequent analysis was narrowed to focus specifically on the other three constructs which are “e-readiness,” “digital readiness,” and “digital transformation readiness.” The broader term “digital transformation” was retained primarily for theoretical exploration, particularly in highly cited and conceptually significant articles.

The second phase of the process involved analysing the identified articles according to their disciplinary focus and publication categories. This categorization helped to identify dominant themes and research domains such as psychology, social sciences, information systems (IS), ICT, and other organizational studies enabling the review to prioritize literature most relevant to employee readiness for digital transformation.

In the third phase, a broader database search was conducted across the most prominent journal publishers which are Elsevier ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, Springer, and Emerald to examine publications from 2010 to 2024. This step aimed to determine the distribution of studies per construct across key academic outlets and to identify articles offering a deeper or more focused examination of DT readiness.

Finally, a detailed analysis of the most frequently cited and methodologically robust articles was conducted. Studies with a strong emphasis on employee-level digital readiness within organizational contexts were selected for thematic synthesis. The key constructs and subthemes identified in these articles were used to construct a concept matrix, enabling a comparative analysis of the literature. This process informed the development of a maturity model to evaluate employees’ digital transformation readiness. Based on the logical flow and interrelation of the categorized themes, a conceptual framework was proposed to assess employee readiness in digital transformation initiatives. This framework highlights the importance of identifying and understanding employee needs as a foundational step for successful DT implementation.

The complete PRISMA flow diagram illustrating the review and selection process is presented in Appendix A, following the structure recommended by Page et al. (2021).

RESULTS

A comprehensive search was conducted across the Web of Science database and leading academic publisher platforms as mentioned above, covering studies published between 2010 and 2024. This search included both journal articles and proceeding papers and yielded 5911 results for “digital transformation,” 22 results for “e-readiness,” 504 for “digital readiness,” and 178 for “digital transformation readiness,” based on matches in the titles, abstracts, and keywords of each source as shown in Figure 1.

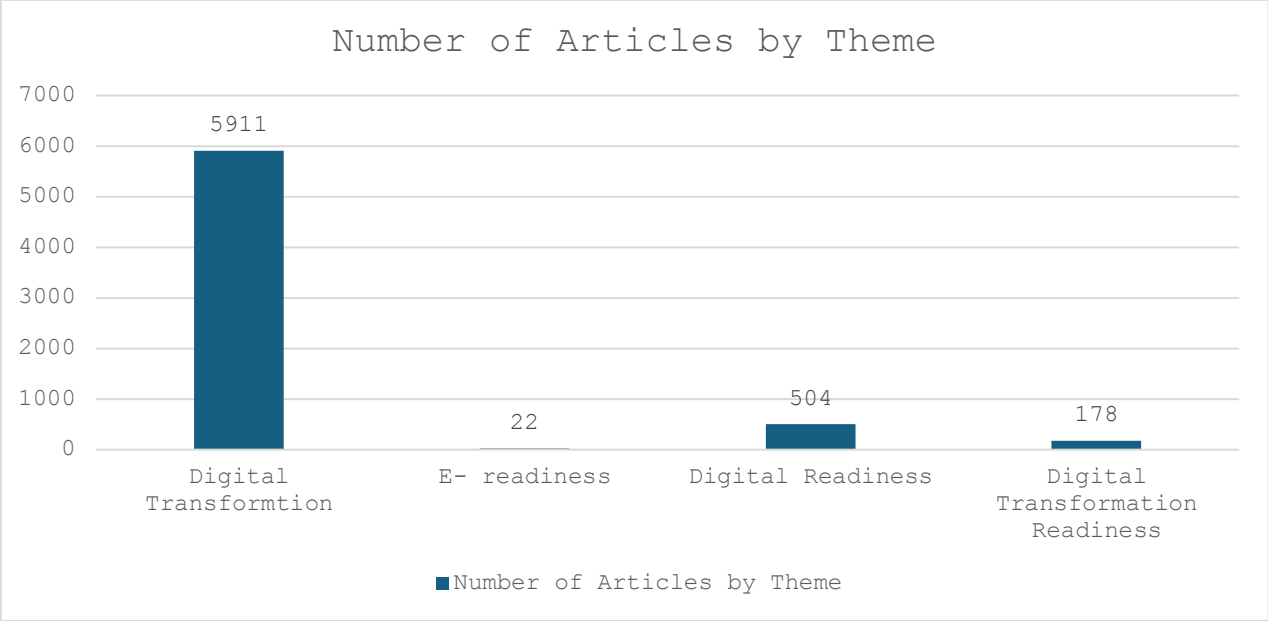

Figure 1: Number of articles by theme, 2010–2024. Source: Web of Science.

Given this study's specific interest in the concept of readiness, the broader theme of digital transformation was excluded from the subsequent in-depth analysis due to its wide applicability across numerous unrelated academic disciplines. Figure 2 presents the year-by-year distribution of published articles on the selected readiness constructs. Among them, e-readiness showed the lowest cumulative count which accounts for only 22 articles. Digital readiness shows a significant surge in interest in recent years, particularly in 2024, which recorded 125 articles, the highest annual count among the constructs. This underscores the increasing relevance of digital readiness in academic and professional discourse. Overall, the majority of publications across all three constructs emerged after 2018, indicating the growing urgency of research in this area.

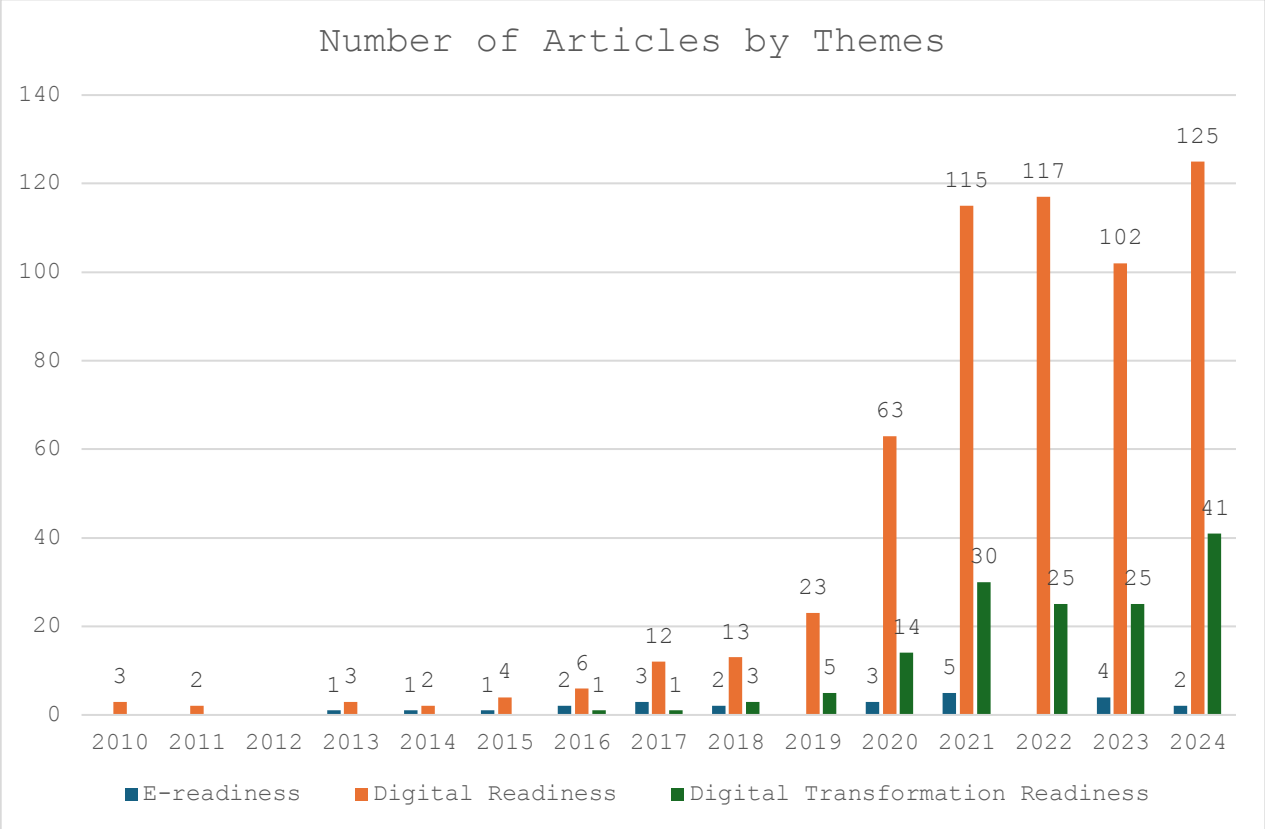

Figure 2: Number of articles by theme by year of publication. Source: Web of Science.

Table 1 outlines the distribution of the reviewed articles by Web of Science subject categories, covering the period from 2010 to 2024. It is important to note that a single article may be classified under multiple categories such as "digital readiness" could appear in both Computer Science and Management, potentially leading to cumulative category counts exceeding the total number of distinct articles. The most frequent categories for e-readiness were Computer Science, Information Science, Business, Education, and Management. In contrast, digital readiness studies were largely published in Education, Business, Economics, and Computer Science, while digital transformation readiness literature was mainly situated within Business, Economics, and Computer Science domains.

Table 1: Number of articles in the main categories per theme. Source: Web of Science.

E-readiness		Digital Readiness		Digital Transformation Readiness	
Education Educational Research	7	Education Educational Research	220	Management	48
Social Science Interdisciplinary	5	Management	97	Education Educational Research	33
Computer Science Artificial Intelligence	3	Computer Science Information System	94	Computer Science Information System	19
Computer Science Theory Method	3	Computer Science Interdisciplinary Applications	61	Computer Science Interdisciplinary Applications	18
Management	3	Social Science Interdisciplinary	46	Computer Science Artificial Intelligence	11
Business	2	Computer Science Theory Method	37	Computer Science Theory Method	7
Computer Science Information System	2	Psychology Multidisciplinary	33	Psychology Multidisciplinary	5
Computer Science Interdisciplinary Applications	2	Computer Science Software Engineering	13	Psychology Applied	2
Computer Science Hardware Architecture	1	Psychology Applied	8	Psychology Experimental	2
Psychology Applied	1	Psychology Educational	8	Computer Science Software Engineering	1
Psychology Clinical	1	Psychology Developmental	5	Psychology Educational	1
Psychology Multidisciplinary	1	Computer Science Hardware Architecture	3		
		Psychology Clinical	3		
		Psychology Experimental	3		

This systematic literature review focuses on articles that are the most relevant to employee-level digital transformation readiness, with special emphasis on articles published in the areas of Educational Research, Management, and Psychology. As detailed in Table 2, a supplementary search across publishers such as Elsevier, Springer, Emerald, and Taylor & Francis from 2010 to 2024 returned 146 articles on "digital

readiness," 34 on "digital transformation readiness," and 4 on "e-readiness." These results were organized by relevance, with "digital readiness" as primary sorting factor.

Table 2: Number of articles per theme by related journal.

	Digital Readiness	Digital Transformation Readiness	E-readiness
Education Science	21	3	
Information Technologies and Learning Tools	19	3	
Frontiers in Psychology	17	2	
IEEE Access	15	2	
Procedia Computer Science	10	4	
Sage Open	10	4	
Frontiers in Education	9	3	
Education and Information Technologies	8		
International Scientific Conference Digital Transformation on Manufacturing Infrastructure and Service	8	8	
Information	6		
Journal of Information Technology and Educational Research	6		
Psychological Science and Education	4	2	
Behavioral Science	3		
European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Science		3	
Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management	3		
Procedia Social and Behavioral Science	3		
Emerging Mobile and Web 2.0 Technologies for Connected E Government			1
Psychology Marketing	2		1
Psychology Addictive Behaviors	2		
Procedia Computer Science			1
Cogent Social Science			1
Total	146	34	4

From this filtered pool, articles that are most closely aligned with the employee aspect of digital transformation readiness and those with the highest citation counts were selected for full review. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework for inductive thematic analysis, the selected articles were analysed to extract recurring themes associated with successful employee engagement in digital transformation. The process involved: familiarization with the literature, generating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming categories, and synthesizing the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun et al., 2023).

The output of this analysis resulted in a concept matrix that synthesizes key categories from each article and serves as the basis for constructing an integrated framework of Employee Digital Transformation Readiness (EDTR). Table 3 presents this matrix in chronological order, ranking articles by the number of thematic categories identified. Notably, the earliest article relevant to employee digital readiness appeared in 2017, further illustrating the emerging nature of this field. The key categories derived from this synthesis included Digital Literacy / Skills, Self-Efficacy and Technology Readiness, Attitudes and Behavioural Intentions toward digital transformation, Psychological Capital, Managerial and Organizational Support, Resistance, Employee Innovativeness, and Perceived Usefulness / Ease of Use. These categories serve as the foundation for the framework proposed in this study.

Table 3: Concept matrix for “Digital Readiness” (DR) and “Digital Transformation Readiness” (DTR).

Study	Digital Literacy / Skills	Self-Efficacy / Tech Readiness	Attitudes Toward DT / Engagement	Psychological Capital	Managerial / Organizational Support	Resistance	Perceived Usefulness / Ease of Use	Employee Innovativeness
Ling et al. (2023)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—
Mutambik & Almuqrin (2024)	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—
Al-Ghazali & Afsar (2022)	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—
Narbariya et al. (2022)	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—
Höyng & Lau (2023)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓	—
Gfrerer et al. (2021)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—
Abdul Hamid (2022)	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓
Cetindamar et al. (2024)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—
Thuy (2024)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓
Heim & Sardar-Drenda (2021)	—	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—

Employee Digital Transformation Readiness

The aim of this systematic review was to examine and synthesize the current literature on Employee Digital Transformation Readiness (EDTR), with the goal of identifying the main constructs that influence individual readiness and enabling the development of a conceptual framework for future research and organizational practice. A comprehensive review of concepts such as e-readiness, digital readiness, and digital transformation readiness reveals that scholarly work specifically focused on digital transformation readiness remains limited. Through the review of 10 core articles, this study offers insights into the multidimensional and emergent nature of EDTR in contemporary organizational settings.

The results from the concept matrix highlight that employee readiness for digital transformation consist of several interrelated dimensions including digital literacy, self-efficacy, behavioural intention, organizational support, and employee innovativeness. These dimensions, drawn from both psychological and organizational behaviour theories, point to the need for a more integrated and human-centered approach to digital transformation initiatives. While traditional models of digital transformation emphasize infrastructure, leadership strategy, and technology adoption at the macro level (Bui et al., 2003; Đurek & Ređep, 2016), our review confirms that transformation success depends largely on employee capacity and willingness to engage with new tools, processes, and cultural norms. As several studies in this review underscore (Ling et al., 2023; Cetindamar et al., 2024), employees' digital literacy and confidence directly influence their perceived readiness, shaping whether they see DT as a growth opportunity or a source of anxiety.

A particularly important insight across the reviewed studies is the role of self-efficacy and behavioural intention in influencing digital readiness. Drawing from TAM, TPB, and related models, studies such as those by Thuy (2024), Mutambik & Almuqrin (2024), and Höyng & Lau (2023) confirm that perceived usefulness and ease of use remain central predictors of employee adoption behaviour. Moreover, the review shows that employee innovativeness which conceptualized as the willingness to experiment, take initiative, and tolerate ambiguity is a powerful moderator of readiness, especially in environments characterized by rapid technological change (Abdul Hamid, 2022; Thuy, 2024). Interestingly, only one study directly applied the concept of psychological capital (PsyCap) to employee readiness (Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2022). This suggests an important gap in the literature since optimism, resilience, and hope are known predictors of change success, they are rarely incorporated into digital transformation frameworks. Future research could benefit from integrating PsyCap as a core lens to explain variance in employee response to digital initiatives.

Managerial and organizational support emerged as another dominant theme in this review. Articles by Gfrerer et al. (2021), Abdul Hamid (2022), and Heim & Sardar-Drenda (2021) provide strong evidence that trust in leadership, access to training and development, and the presence of a supportive digital culture all enhance employee readiness. These findings suggest that employees are more likely to embrace digital transformation when they perceive alignment between organizational values and their own development opportunities. On the other hand, resistance to digital transformation is frequently linked to low confidence, lack of communication, or misalignment between management expectations and employee capacity (Mutambik & Almuqrin, 2024; Gfrerer et al., 2021). Therefore, organizations must treat digital readiness not only as a technical issue but as a strategic human resource and change management challenge. Taken together, these insights affirm that EDTR should be viewed as a multifaceted capacity that consists of key dimensions such as technical, psychological, behavioural, and contextual components, as summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4: EDTR Dimensions and Criteria

Dimension	Criteria / Components	Description and Supporting Evidence
Digital Literacy & Skills	Basic ICT proficiency, navigation, data use	Foundation for digital tool usage; core to perceived behavioral control in TPB (Cetindamar et al., 2024); linked to self-efficacy and innovation behavior (Chen & Shen, 2025).
Psychological Readiness	Self-efficacy, PsyCap (hope, optimism, resilience), innovativeness	Drives confidence for uptake; moderates ease- and usefulness-perception relationships (Thuy, 2024; Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2022); Innovativeness supports transformational attitudes.

Behavioural Intention	Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, intentional readiness	TAM constructs remain predictive of tech adoption (Mutambik & Almuqrin, 2024; Höyng & Lau, 2023); Intentional readiness bridges knowledge and actual use.
Organizational Support & Culture	Training, leadership encouragement, trust, digital norms	Leadership and culture shape perceptions and readiness (Heim & Sardar–Drenda, 2021; Gfrerer et al., 2021); Digital support mitigates resistance.
Resistance	Fear of change, change fatigue, process complexity	Known adoption barriers (Mutambik & Almuqrin, 2024; Gfrerer et al., 2021); cultural and process adaptation needed.
Employee Innovativeness	Openness to change, experimentation, proactivity	Acts as a key moderator; bolsters positive attribution and technology engagement (Thuy, 2024; Abdul Hamid, 2022).

These dimensions reflect the essential resources and competencies linked to employee digital readiness, serving as critical success factors for digital transformation initiatives. The identified dimensions and their corresponding criteria are as follow:

Digital literacy and skills emerged as the most foundational element of employee readiness. As noted by Cetindamar et al. (2024), digital literacy shapes not only the capacity to use digital tools, but also employees' perceived behavioural control, which in turn influences their intention to engage in digital transformation. Similarly, Ling et al. (2023) and Gfrerer et al. (2021) demonstrate that higher digital competence among employees is associated with more positive perceptions of digital initiatives and greater willingness to adopt new technologies. This is especially relevant in digitally immature organizations or public sectors, where literacy gaps can widen the readiness divide.

Psychological Readiness which consists of self-efficacy, resilience, optimism, and openness to change plays a critical role in employee digital readiness. However, there is only one study (Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2022) identified to explicitly adopts the concept of psychological capital (PsyCap), yet several others indirectly highlight components such as confidence and adaptability (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021; Abdul Hamid, 2022). These internal capacities are crucial, particularly in periods of digital disruption or uncertainty. Without psychological readiness, even skilled employees may hesitate to fully participate in transformation efforts.

Behavioural Intention and the continued relevance of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) also contribute to digital readiness of employees. TAM and its extensions remain central in explaining employee behaviour toward digital tools. Studies by Mutambik & Almuqrin (2024); Thuy (2024); and Höyng & Lau (2023) claimed that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are reliable predictors of behavioural intention to use technology. These constructs, when linked with digital literacy and psychological traits, shape intentional readiness, defined by an employee's conscious motivation and willingness to adapt to digital processes. This behavioural lens confirms that readiness is not static, but evolves through experience, exposure, and support.

The influence of organizational support is consistently reinforced throughout the reviewed literature. Leadership support, training, communication, and an empowering digital culture were found to shape employee readiness both directly and indirectly (Gfrerer et al., 2021; Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021; Höyng & Lau, 2023). When employees perceive their organization as supportive, offering clear direction, psychological safety, and investment in skills, they are more likely to engage with digital initiatives. Conversely, the absence of these conditions leads to organizational misalignment, reduced trust, and readiness fatigue.

Despite the growing emphasis on digital acceptance, resistance to transformation remains a significant theme. Some employees exhibit hesitation due to fear of obsolescence, change fatigue, or a lack of clarity in expectations (Mutambik & Almuqrin, 2024; Gfrerer et al., 2021). Resistance often stems not from unwillingness, but from perceived threat, organizational miscommunication, or limited agency in decision-making. These findings suggest that readiness building should not only amplify enablers but should also diagnose and mitigate psychological and structural barriers.

Lastly, employee innovativeness emerged as a key moderator that shapes the impact of readiness enablers. As illustrated by Thuy (2024), individuals with higher levels of innovativeness which defined as openness to

change, curiosity, and risk tolerance are more likely to perceive new technologies positively and engage more proactively. Research by Abdul Hamid (2022) supports this by suggesting that proactive personality traits enhance adaptive performance in digital contexts. This points to a need for talent strategies that not only build skills, but also foster traits conducive to digital agility.

The EDTR Framework

Based on the theoretical background presented and the analysis of the key constructs and employee dimensions related to digital readiness, the employee digital transformation readiness (EDTR) framework is presented in Figure 3 below. The proposed framework consists of six interrelated dimensions namely Digital Literacy and Skills, Psychological Readiness, Managerial and Organizational Support, Resistance, Behavioural Intention, and Employee Innovativeness. These dimensions interact to shape the central construct of Employee Digital Transformation Readiness, which in turn facilitates the successful implementation of digital transformation strategies at the organizational level.

In this framework, digital literacy encompasses an employee's ability to navigate digital platforms, interpret data, and interact with digital tools. It is foundational to employee readiness, serving as a prerequisite for engaging with new technologies and systems (Ling et al., 2023; Cetindamar et al., 2024). While psychological readiness encompasses an individual's internal resources to cope with and adapt to change. These include self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience collectively referred to as psychological capital (PsyCap) (Luthans et al., 2007). Whereas for managerial and organizational support, transformational leadership, training, and a supportive digital culture which are the main components of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) encourage digital readiness (Höyng & Lau, 2023; Gfrerer et al., 2021).

On the other hand, resistance functions as a counteracting force in the EDTR model. Despite efforts to enable digital transformation, many employees may resist change due to fear, ambiguity, lack of trust, or digital fatigue (Mutambik & Almuqrin, 2024; Gfrerer et al., 2021). Behavioural Intention encompasses an employee's motivation and willingness to adopt digital technologies. Drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this dimension includes two key predictors namely perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) (Höyng & Lau, 2023). Studies confirm that these perceptions significantly influence an individual's intent to use digital tools (Thuy, 2024; Mutambik & Almuqrin, 2024). In this framework, behavioural intention serves as the mediating mechanism. Employee innovativeness refers to an individual's tendency to seek out and experiment with new ideas, technologies, and methods (Thuy, 2024; Abdul Hamid, 2022). This trait acts as a moderating factor in the EDTR model, enhancing the relationship between behavioural intention and actual readiness.

Together, these six dimensions form a comprehensive view of employee readiness for digital transformation. Digital literacy and psychological readiness represent individual-level enablers, while managerial support and resistance reflect the organizational environment that shapes readiness development. Behavioural intention serves as a bridge between enablers and action, and employee innovativeness enhances the impact of intention by fostering openness to change. At the centre of this model refers to the Employee Digital Transformation Readiness (EDTR) which defined as the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural preparedness of employees to adopt and sustain digital practices. This readiness enables smoother, more inclusive implementation of digital strategies and ultimately contributes to the success of organizational digital transformation initiatives (Ling et al., 2023; Salamzadeh et al., 2024). This framework not only fills a gap in the current literature, where employee-level readiness is often underexplored, but also offers a practical diagnostic tool for organizations. By assessing each dimension, employers can identify gaps, design targeted interventions, and cultivate a workforce that is resilient, innovative, and digitally competent.

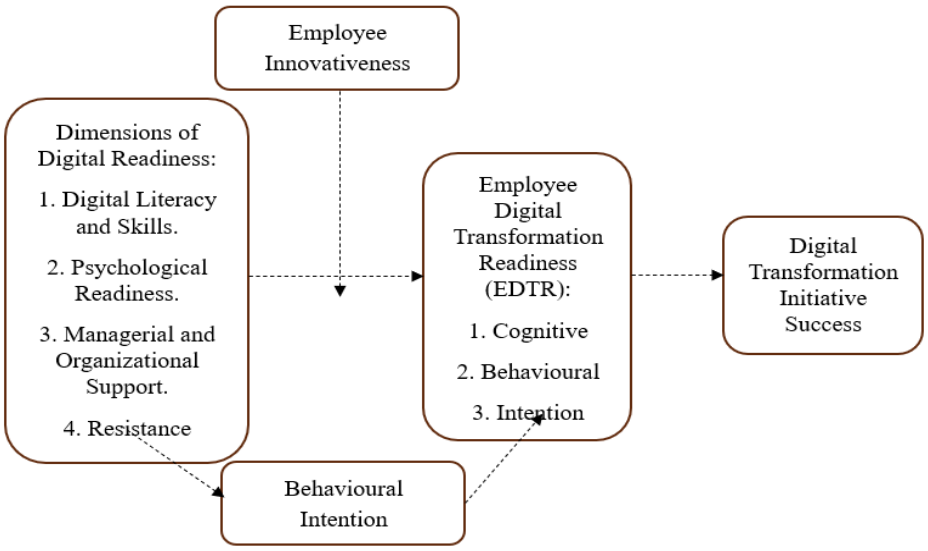

Figure 3: Employee Digital Transformation Readiness (EDTR) Framework.

CONCLUSIONS

This systematic literature review aimed to explore the multidimensional nature of Employee Digital Transformation Readiness (EDTR) by identifying, analysing, and synthesizing the key constructs that influence individual-level readiness for digital transformation (DT). The study responded to the research question: What do employees need to succeed in DT initiatives, and how can their readiness be assessed? Drawing from a wide range of literature across psychology, information systems, and organizational studies, this review identified six core dimensions of EDTR which are digital literacy and skills, psychological readiness, organizational support, behavioural intention, resistance, and employee innovativeness.

A conceptual EDTR framework was developed to integrate these dimensions, providing a structured lens for understanding how individual-level competencies and contextual enablers contribute to successful digital transformation. The findings indicate that readiness is not merely the presence of technical skill but a complex interplay of psychological capital, behavioural intent, cultural alignment, and perceived support. The framework emphasizes the human-centered nature of digital transformation and offers a foundational model for guiding future research and practice.

Theoretical contribution

The first theoretical contribution of this study is that it advances the conceptualization of digital readiness at the employee level, shifting the scholarly conversation from infrastructural or organizational concerns to individual psychological and behavioural dynamics (Michelotto & Joia, 2024; Gfrerer et al., 2021). While existing models often focus on technological capability and leadership alignment, this framework explicitly integrates psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2007), behavioural intention (Davis, 1989), and digital innovativeness (Thuy, 2024) as essential dimensions of readiness. Furthermore, this study offers a multidisciplinary synthesis that bridges information systems, organizational behaviour, and change management. By combining models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), psychological capital (PsyCap) theory, and change readiness theory, the proposed EDTR framework provides a comprehensive, theoretically grounded understanding of how employees respond to digital transformation. Moreover, the study extends prior work by introducing employee innovativeness as a moderating factor, a variable rarely explored in digital readiness models (Abdul Hamid, 2022; Thuy, 2024). This inclusion highlights the role of individual personality traits and cognitive openness in amplifying readiness and facilitating digital adoption. Another theoretical contribution of this study is that the inductive thematic synthesis of the concept matrix contributes to theory-building by identifying common constructs across diverse studies and organizing them into a cohesive diagnostic framework. This supports future empirical validation and model development.

Practical contributions

In addition to the theoretical contributions mentioned above, the findings also offer several practical contributions for digital transformation practitioners, HR professionals, and organizational leaders. The first practical contributions is that organizations can use the EDTR framework as a diagnostic tool to assess employee readiness before launching digital transformation initiatives. This includes evaluating digital skill levels, psychological preparedness, and openness to innovation. Then, by identifying specific readiness gaps, managers can develop targeted interventions such as digital upskilling programs, resilience training, and mentorship initiatives to build psychological capital (Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2022; Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). Moreover, understanding resistance as a dynamic and context-dependent dimension of readiness enables leaders to proactively address employee concerns and promote a culture of trust and digital confidence. Furthermore, organizational supports emerged as a crucial enabler. This suggests that transformational leadership, transparent communication, and participative change processes are instrumental in enhancing digital engagement and reducing transformation fatigue. In addition, HR teams can prioritize the recruitment and development of innovative and proactive employees, recognizing that such individuals act as catalysts in digital change initiatives.

Limitation and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this review has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. Although the review was conducted rigorously using the PRISMA protocol and multiple databases, publication bias may exist as only peer-reviewed English-language journal articles were included. Future studies could include extant literature, conference proceedings, and case studies to expand the dataset. While the EDTR framework was developed through systematic synthesis, it has yet to be empirically validated. Future research should test the framework using quantitative methods such as survey design and structural equation modelling or qualitative approaches such as interviews and case studies to assess its practical applicability across different industries and national contexts. Besides that, the framework is majorly based on cross-sectional studies. Hence, longitudinal research is needed to understand how employee readiness evolves over time and how interventions or leadership strategies impact readiness trajectories. While the model is intentionally generalizable, sector-specific factors such as regulation, public sector bureaucracy, or workforce demographics may influence readiness constructs differently. Contextualizing EDTR by industry or role could enrich the framework. Furthermore, cultural influences on digital readiness such as national culture, organizational values, or generational digital fluency are underexplored in current studies. Future research could investigate how such cultural factors moderate or mediate the relationship between readiness constructs and digital transformation success.

Overall, with the accelerated evolution of digital technologies and the increasing complexity of workplace transformation, expanding the theoretical understanding of how employees engage with digital change is essential for anticipating and supporting the success of digital transformation initiatives. This study moves in this direction by offering a comprehensive and integrated framework for conceptualizing and evaluating employee digital transformation readiness (EDTR). By focusing on the psychological, behavioural, and contextual dimensions of readiness, this work contributes to a more human-centered approach to digital transformation, helping organizations and scholars to be better prepare for the profound shifts reshaping the future of work.

APPENDIX A

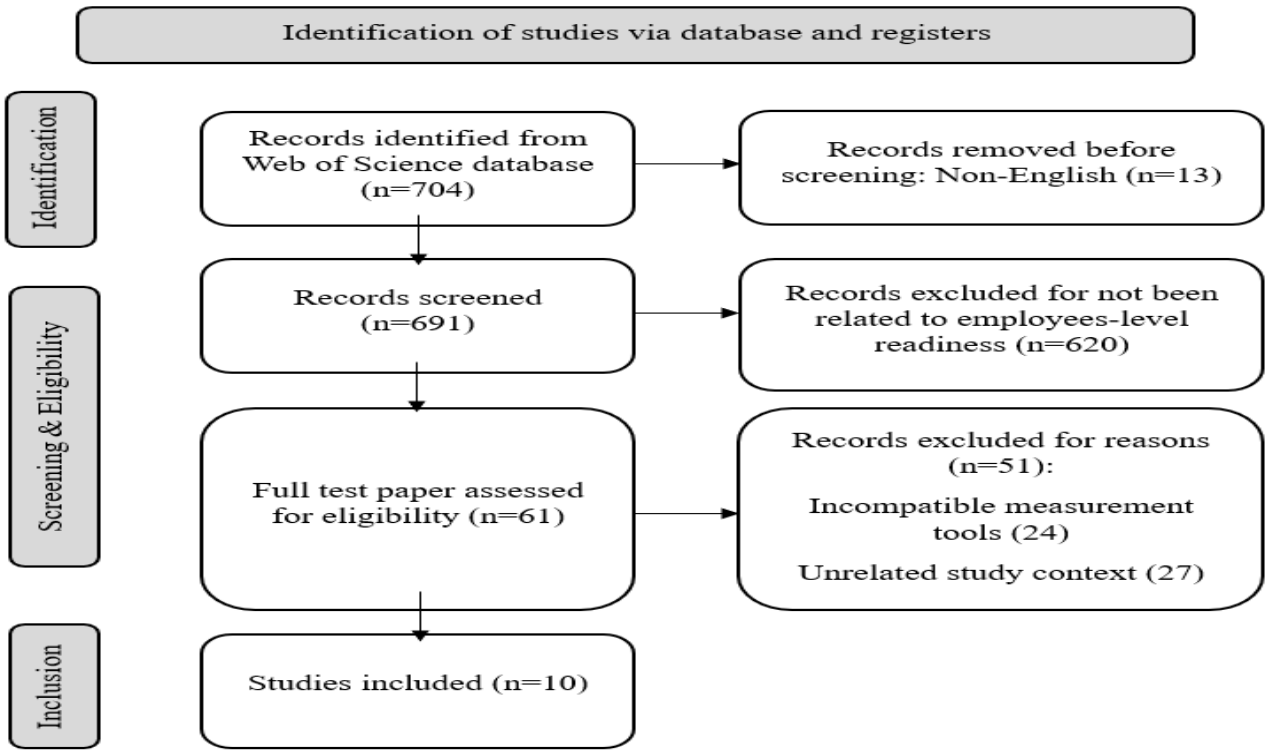

Figure A1: PRISMA flow diagram for the systematic literature review. Source: Page et al. (2021).

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