Editorial: Fusing management and workplace health: a research agenda on digitalization

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Digitalization leads to changes in companies, new business models and the founding of new companies. Workplaces change when new technologies allow and demand new ways of working. Examples are hybrid-remote work, where employees can collaborate synchronously using technologies like video conferencing systems or online platforms, meetings in the metaverse or mobile presence through telepresence robots. These technologies allow workplaces to include employees and managers from a distance, allowing higher flexibility and better compatibility of family and work, contribute to less traffic and, therefore, potentially improve climate change. In healthcare, service robots can support employees in patient care in times of shortage of caretakers. Other workplaces use mental healthtech apps to continuously collect data about people's mental health and well-being, allowing workplaces to act and provide the necessary employee assistance programs. For example, big data analysis leads to new possibilities, as it can support managers' decisions, especially in complex situations where quick actions are necessary. In particular, artificial intelligence (AI) allows gig work on digital platforms like Wolt, Mechanical Turk or Uber as new, flexible work forms that can include a diverse workforce.

New technologies also lead to a reorganization of workplaces. In the future, offices might be more open with free seating so that employees can meet and include technologies that allow the integration of distant employees. In other cases, less office space may be needed when workplaces allow people to work from home. However, employees and managers might prefer to come to the office to meet their colleagues, brainstorm about new projects and discuss issues in ongoing projects. Furthermore, employees working from home need to be integrated into such meetings via video conferences or telepresence robots. Together, these changes made available via digital technologies call for new and responsible management approaches and work design, particularly how to ensure workplace health for all. Leadership during transitions like these requires support from the organization (Ipsen *et al.*, 2018). The support ensures that the managers develop in tandem with the change process, so their management and leadership match the new ways of working and do not reflect how things were and used to be. However, a recent study of managers leading their employees through times of change shows that organizational support was limited (Ipsen *et al.*, 2022). From this, we learn the importance of fusing management and workplace health and that it involves all levels and factors.

While these new digital technologies provide opportunities for businesses, employees and managers, they also have potential pitfalls. New technologies also allow the collection of a massive amount of data, e.g. via sensors, data tracking, workplace computers or GPS. Employees can be digitally monitored when working from home, and these data can be analyzed to learn about work habits and performance, so it is possible to reward or punish employees (Jeske, 2022). On the one hand, data collection and analysis could lead to a fairer evaluation of an employee's work. On the other hand, algorithmic decision-making is untransparent, can only rely on available data and might therefore be biased and considered unfair. The negative consequences of digital monitoring are already visible in platform work, where constant monitoring and quick assignments of tasks can lead to a higher work pace with no breaks (Nielsen *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, there are growing concerns about the

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negative consequences of AI and other new technologies (Mikalef *et al.*, 2022). New ethical and legal issues arise, like unintended discrimination, biased outcomes or questionable decisions.

Given these changes and trends, *IJWHM* calls for papers to discuss this triangle of technology (digitalization), workplace health and management, which is relevant in a wide range of work, e.g. remote work, blue collar and service work (Tarafdar and Saunders, 2022) and knowledge work in general.

How do employees and managers feel when working with these new technologies? How is their workplace health influenced? Do managers and employees experience technostress when dealing with these technologies? Are they afraid to be replaced by a robot? How can managers support their employees and ensure their performance and well-being if they can only meet them online? Who supports the performance and well-being of the managers? How can managers organize work with remote and onsite employees and new technologies? How can managers and employees trust decisions made by AI when digitalization takes a leading position? Are regulations needed about what algorithms monitoring employees are allowed? How do we ensure workplace health when employees work for a digital platform, only communicating with software?

In 2023, the aims and vision for the International Journal of Workplace Health Management remain the same. We want to continue publishing rigorous research and practical insights on managing health, well-being and performance in work settings. We envision healthy workplaces with a management practice concerned with workplace health at the strategic level, in the design of work and daily tasks, and in how to manage workplace health in a proactive, sustainable way that also supports workplace performance (Ipsen *et al.*, 2020).

Through the coming year, we aim to enhance workplace knowledge about the role of digitalization and what they allow regarding improved work and workplaces. How can workplace health be monitored, protected and promoted daily, and what is the research contribution in this endeavor? What are the potential pitfalls, and how can they be managed? With the new ways of working, we want to see the journal become an essential resource for practitioners, researchers and decision-makers interested in or tasked with supporting health in work settings.

As sustainable management and new digital technologies affect work in new ways and expand fields, new research topics naturally become established. Therefore, we hope to receive papers in 2023 that reflect the potential for fusing management and workplace health in the age of digitalization.

Wishing all a happy 2023.

Kathrin Kirchner and Christine Ipsen

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