Motivating Human Resources to Foster Innovation Elements of Smart Workplace Design in Qatar

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in facilitating the transition to smart workplaces within the unique context of Qatar's Vision 2030. While existing literature mostly focuses on technological aspects, this study addresses a critical gap by exploring the strategic, cultural, and motivational dimensions of HRM. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of 68 peer-reviewed articles and key policy documents published between 2014 and 2025, this research synthesizes evidence on smart workplaces' implications for employee well-being, sustainability, and innovation. The analysis moves beyond description to develop an integrated HRM framework for smart workplaces in transitional economies. This framework theorizes that successful smart workplace implementation centers around the synergistic alignment of technology-enabled HRM systems (data-driven performance management, virtual training), cultural adaptation (balancing global tech trends with local values), and strategic HRM outcomes (well-being, innovation, and sustainability). The paper argues that Qatar's experience, as a rapidly modernizing nation with a diverse workforce, provides an important example for HRM scholars and practitioners in similar contexts worldwide, as it demonstrates how strategic HRM can bridge technological potential with human and organizational outcomes.

Keywords

Smart Workplace, Innovation, Human Resources, Well-Being, Qatar Vision 2030, Systematic Literature Review, Conceptual Framework

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, traditional work practices have undergone significant

changes (Errichiello & Pianese, 2018). In the past, employees typically worked together in the same physical office for around 40 hours a week, generally from Monday to Friday (Fayomi & Sani, 2022). However, with technological advancements, workplaces have evolved, transitioning from traditional offices to smart workplaces (Papagiannidis & Marikyan, 2020). The term "smart" gained widespread adoption in the early 2000s to describe emerging technological concepts (Chan et al., 2008). This smart approach has become a defining feature of the technologies driving the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Gajdzik & Wolniak, 2022).

Nowadays, in the dynamic work environment of modern times, innovation is the most essential value in organisations. Recognising, adapting to, facilitating, and maintaining, it can make all the difference between success and failure (Schmid & Dowling, 2020). Yet, it is one of the most challenging qualities to manage. We live in an era of intense knowledge creation, but our organisational structures often resist the necessary changes. Moreover, the dynamics of organisational culture and Human Resource Management (HRM) within innovative workplaces actually facilitate innovation in the modern world (McMurray et al., 2021).

The model of "who employs whom", "who should undertake", and "how work is accomplished" will continue to evolve. Synergising traditional and virtual employees in innovative workplaces taps the productive capacity of converging and diverging knowledge and work perspectives. Intelligent workplaces are dynamic, and the twenty-first-century workplace will continue to be transformed by significant quantities of technology. An HR-facilitated organisational culture will emerge to bind organisational learning, change, and innovation (Al-Faouri et al., 2024). Remote work will continue to shape the smart workplace (Hamrick et al., 2025), as most employees prefer to work remotely (Life at Google, 2020; Microsoft, 2020; PwC, 2021).

Management's primary role is driving change, especially as the world constantly evolves and competition is fierce. Managers are focusing more on fostering change, adaptation, and creativity. One of the most exciting innovations in this area is the concept of the smart workplace. The smart workplace enables organisations to become more flexible and efficient, promoting teamwork in ways that were previously difficult (Fayomi & Sani, 2021). This transition to digital transformation necessitates an investigation of smart workplaces, where the rise of digitalisation of physical objects and their utilisation to enhance work processes and increase efficiency requires consideration (Bartuseviciene & Valioniene, 2021; Schmid & Dowling, 2020).

The Qatar National Vision 2030 establishes a high-level national strategy and implementation plans to transform Qatar into a self-sustaining, advanced society by 2030 (NPC, 2008; GCO, 2022). Within this framework, smart workplaces equipped with digital infrastructure (e.g., IoT, AI tools, cloud systems), human-centred design, and connectivity emerge as critical enablers (Zhang et al., 2022).

By embedding smart workplace initiatives into each of the vision's four pillars (Human Development, Economic Development, Environmental Development, and Social Development).

As AI plays a key role in transforming and empowering the private and government sectors in Saudi Arabia's plans for their Vision 2030 (AlGosaibi et al., 2020), Qatar can strengthen its transformation into a knowledge-based economy by supporting competitive infrastructure, advancing human development through enhanced skills, training, and innovation, promoting environmental sustainability through reduced resource use and smarter operations, and fostering social inclusivity by creating accessible and adaptable work environments. Integrating smart workplace strategies ensures that by 2030, Qatar not only achieves its envisioned standard of living but also stands as a regional leader in technology-driven work innovation, economic diversification, and sustainable growth (GCO, 2022).

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 details the systematic literature review methodology, including search protocols and inclusion criteria. Section 3 presents the literature review. Section 4 introduces a novel conceptual framework derived from the analysis. Section 5 discusses key findings and research gaps, and Section 6 concludes with implications for theory and practice. Margins, column widths, line spacing, and type styles are built in; examples of the type styles are provided throughout this document and are identified in italic type, within parentheses, following the example. Some components, such as multi-leveled equations, graphics, and tables, are not prescribed, although the various table text styles are provided. The formatter will need to create these components, incorporating the applicable criteria that follow.

2. Methodology

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology, following the structured protocols originally suggested by scholars such as Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003) and Fisch and Block (2018) to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and consistency. The process consisted of three distinct phases: planning, execution, and synthesis.

2.1. Planning: Identification of Research Need and Protocol Development

The primary research question guiding this systematic review of the literature is: "*What is the role of Human Resource Management in motivating employees and fostering innovation within smart workplaces, particularly in the context of Qatar's Vision* 2030?". Qatar was selected as the contextual focus due to its strategic investment in digital transformation under Qatar National Vision 2030, combined with a unique sociocultural and labour market environment that remains underexplored in smart workplace research.

2.2. Execution: Search Strategy and Study Selection

The methodological approach of the study is based on the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) technique by Tranfield et al. (2003), which consists of three main steps: pre-validation, validation, and post-validation. The systematic literature review also aims to identify the relevant literature and outline the research strategies (Fisch & Block, 2018).

A comprehensive search was conducted in four major academic databases: Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and EBSCOhost (Business Source Complete). To include and examine relevant grey literature and policy context, reports from the World Economic Forum, Qatar's Government Communication Office (GCO), and Civil Service Bureau were also included. The search was limited to articles published in English between 2014 and 2025 to capture the most recent evolution of the field.

In the first step of data collection, articles were searched and selected from various academic databases, which are abstract and citation databases of scientific and non-scientific journals. A comprehensive search was conducted across four major academic databases—Web of Science, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and EBSCO-host (Business Source Complete). To capture relevant grey literature as well as policy context, reports from the World Economic Forum (WEF), Qatar's Government Communication Office (GCO), and Civil Service Bureau were also included. The search string was constructed using Boolean operators: ("smart workplace" OR "future of work" OR "hybrid workplace") AND ("human resource" OR HRM) AND ("innovati" OR "well-being" OR "sustainab*"). The search was limited to articles published in English between 2014 and 2025 to capture the most recent evolution of the field. The initial search retrieved 17,500 records published within the specific period. This screening process applied a specific inclusion criterion. First, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, or substantive reports from international organizations were included. Second, only the sources that focused on smart workplace technologies (AI, IoT, automation) and their intersection with HRM practices were included. Third, the study included discussion of outcomes such as employee well-being, innovation, sustainability, or cultural adaptation. Studies focusing solely on technical specifications of technology without human/organizational implications were excluded. This screening resulted in 138 articles for full-text review. A subsequent critical appraisal of these full texts for quality and direct relevance to the research question refined the final corpus to 68 key publications. Figure 1 shows the PRISMA flow chart that was used to guide the screening process.

These articles were read critically to evaluate their quality and relevance. Finally, to gain a broader view of smart workplaces and their implications for international organisations, reports from global organisations such as the World Economic Forum, McKinsey & Company, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), NASSCOM, Deloitte India, Gartner, and PwC were utilised for insight. These publications were essential reports on a worldwide scale concerning the implementation of smart workplaces.
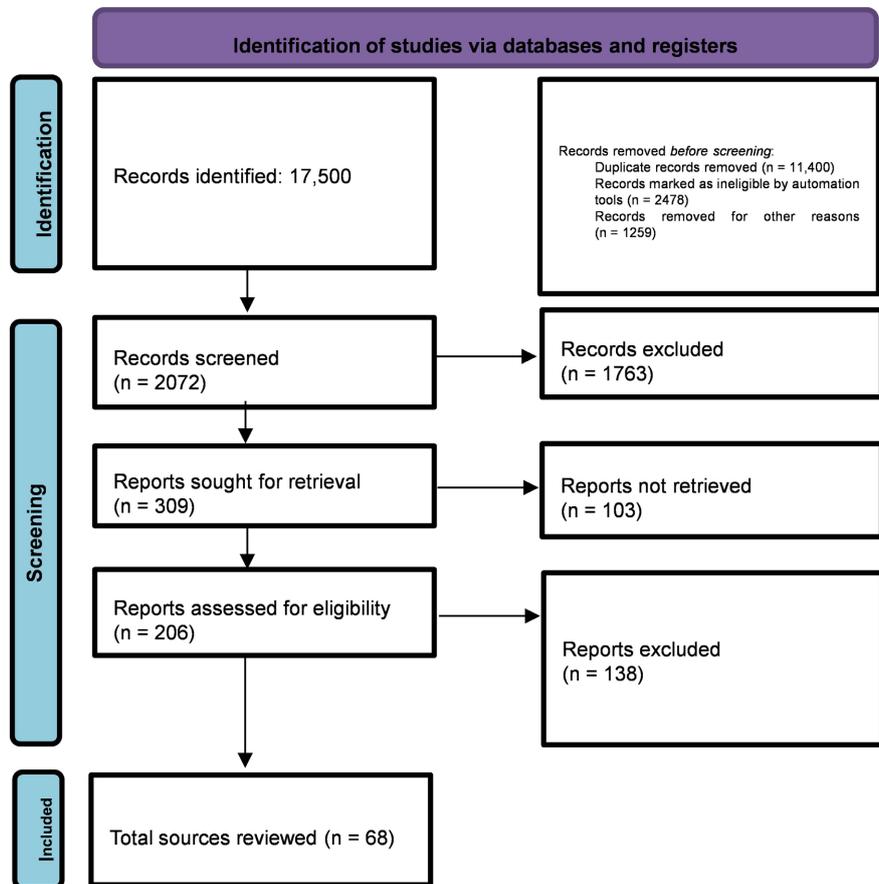
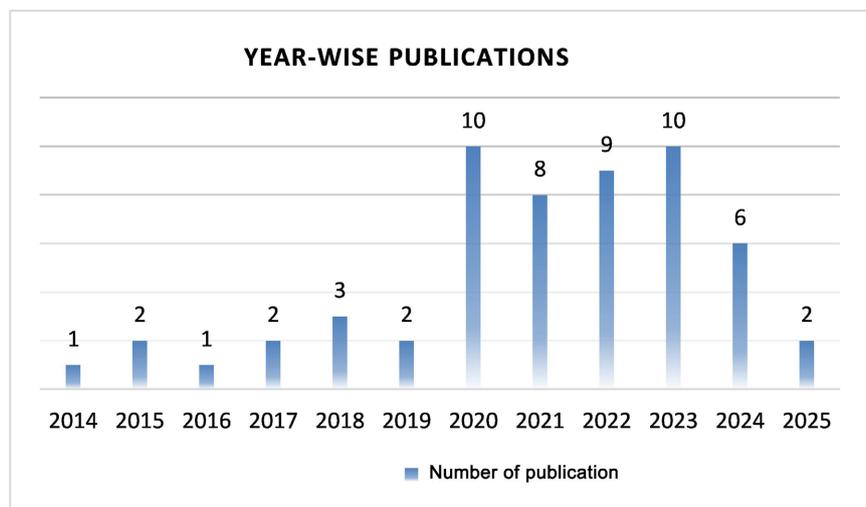**Figure 1.** The PRISMA adapted from Page et al. (2021).

Figure 2. Year-wise publications.

The number of publications per year, as shown in **Figure 2**, illustrates the distribution of studies over time. The concept of the smart workplace has emerged as a trend since the COVID-19 pandemic, including remote work and virtual meetings (Khan, 2022), which have also accelerated interest in the topic among

researchers (Bartuseviciene & Valioniene, 2021). Data for 2025 are incomplete, as this research has been conducted at the beginning of the year.

2.3. Data Extraction and Analysis

A standardized data extraction form was used to code the 68 publications. Key data points included: author(s) and year, research objectives, methodology, key findings related to HRM, and context (e.g., geographical, industrial). The extracted data were then analyzed using a thematic synthesis approach. Initial codes were grouped into descriptive themes (e.g., "well-being challenges", "training needs"), which were subsequently developed into analytical themes that form the basis of the conceptual framework presented in Section 4. Moreover, Table 1 provides an example of the thematic synthesis process. A thematic synthesis approach was employed to analyze the selected studies (Thomas & Harden, 2008). First, line-by-line coding was conducted to identify recurring concepts related to HR practices, technology use, employee motivation, and workplace design. Second, similar codes were grouped into descriptive themes that reflected patterns across the literature. Third, these descriptive themes were further abstracted into analytical themes, which informed the development of the conceptual framework. Finally, the analytical themes were synthesized into three overarching components: Technology-Enabled Systems, Cultural Adaptation, and Strategic HRM Outcomes.

Table 1. Example of thematic synthesis process.

Sample Findings from the Literature	Initial Codes	Descriptive Theme	Analytical Component
Flexible work improves engagement in digital offices.	Flexibility, autonomy	Smart work practices	Strategic HRM outcomes
Resistance to AI due to cultural norms	Trust, acceptance	Cultural sensitivity	Cultural adaptation

3. Literature Review

3.1. Smart Workplace and Employee Well-Being

As smart technologies play an increasingly critical role in reshaping the modern workplace, the extent to which these technologies influence employee well-being has become a matter of great interest. Smart offices integrated with future technologies, including the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and automation, can enhance physical and mental well-being in a more personalised and easier work environment (Brougham & Haar, 2017; Errichiello & Pianese, 2018). For instance, a documented strategy to increase comfort and reduce stress at work involves the use of smart sensors for regulating temperature, light, and air quality (Papagiannidis & Marikyan, 2020). Staff members who work in these spaces experience less discomfort from poor air quality and/or inadequate lighting, which can impact their mood, attention, and overall sense of well-being (Remes et al., 2021; Obrecht et al., 2019; Vischer, 2008).

Moreover, the flexible work arrangements that these technologies enable—such as remote work, flexible hours, and collaborative digital tools—have been shown to improve work-life balance, a crucial element for maintaining mental health (D'Angelo et al., 2024; Schmid & Dowling, 2020; Radonić et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic expedited the widespread adoption of these smart workplace strategies, particularly remote work. As many employees transitioned to working from home, it became apparent that smart technologies enabled a seamless shift without a drop in productivity. For many, this also contributed to better work-life balance (Yang et al., 2021; Weinberg & Scandura, 2024).

While the shift to smart workplaces brings numerous benefits, such as enhancing productivity and well-being (Haapakangas et al., 2018), it also has unintended consequences. Continued use of digital tools and remote working has led to the phenomenon of "digital fatigue", a condition that stems from extended screen time and a lack of physical interaction with colleagues. Studies indicate that over-reliance on digital communication tools can lead to employee burnout and isolation (Chandrasekaran et al., 2024). To mitigate these effects, HRM needs to implement strategies that promote employee engagement and support mental health, such as encouraging physical activity, mindfulness practices, and regular digital detoxes.

Although working from home enhances work-life balance and reduces costs for organisations, it requires more focus from managers in strategic planning for employees' schedules and problem coverage, which leads to stress as well as difficulties in sharing knowledge (van der Lippe & Lippényi, 2019). Additionally, the increase in digital work environments raises concerns regarding data privacy and security, which can lead to stress if employees feel their data is being monitored excessively (Dzhambinova, 2022). As technology evolves, HR departments must be proactive in addressing these concerns by ensuring transparent policies around the use of data and databases, implementing robust cybersecurity measures, and ensuring that employees are well-skilled to utilise the new technologies in the workplace.

3.2. Human Resource Management in Smart Workplaces

HRM plays a critical role in integrating and managing smart workplace technologies. The digital transformation of workplaces necessitates that HR develop new strategies that align with technological advancements while fostering an inclusive and motivating work environment. One of the primary HRM functions in this context is ensuring that employees adapt successfully to new technologies. As workplaces become increasingly automated and digitised, the demand for skilled workers proficient in digital tools has surged (Schmid & Dowling, 2020).

HRM strategies should not only focus on recruitment but also on continuous employee development, ensuring that employees have access to the training needed to stay up-to-date with technological advancements. Research has shown that workplaces that invest in continuous learning and reskilling programs tend to have

higher employee retention and satisfaction rates, particularly in fast-paced environments where change is rapid (Verma et al., 2023). Human resources professionals also strive to maintain a healthy and productive workplace, which requires determined effort and dedication to the company (Tiwari, 2023). This is essential to ensure a work-life balance, as the future will likely bring more changes in remote working policies and flexibility (Gigauri, 2020).

The trend towards more flexible working models, including hybrid or fully remote working arrangements, also requires a new approach to performance management systems (Gigauri, 2020; Osello et al., 2023). Employee monitoring and evaluation techniques that have traditionally been used in traditional office settings may not be effective in smart workplaces. HRM should not rely on accountability indicators based on hours worked or office presence but should rather transition to a performance indicator based on results achieved (Osello et al., 2023). This change also reflects the broader trend of providing more freedom and alternatives for employees, and focusing on results rather than methods.

One critical aspect of this shift is the use of digital tools to support HR processes. AI, big data analytics, and other technologies empower HR to make data-driven decisions not only on when to hire but also on how to streamline the onboarding process, perform more accurate performance reviews, and enhance employee engagement. However, HRM must weigh the benefits and risks of such tools, as, for example, algorithmic bias and privacy concerns can also affect a company's reputation if not addressed appropriately and are a threat to employee trust (see Schmid & Dowling, 2020).

In the future, workplaces will play a key role in human resources, as sharing co-working spaces replaces traditional staff recruitment, which will be conducted in virtual reality. Workplace innovation refers to the introduction of new and integrated approaches in areas like work organisation, human resource management, and supporting technologies (Pot, 2011). This may provide significant inspiration and have various implications for human resources.

The implication also includes the development of virtual training programs that can be created using e-mesomorph profiling, as well as the creation and streaming of an interoperable e-test that addresses neuroplastic and motivational paradigms for all potential employees (Hamouche, 2021). Consequently, modern employees should possess both intellectual and digital (IT) skills, as well as the physical and mental aptitude to operate business technologies, thereby fostering greater innovation and creativity (Gajdzik & Wolniak, 2022).

3.3. Smart Workplace and Sustainability

Sustainability in smart workplaces extends beyond environmental considerations to include social and economic dimensions. One of the most significant benefits of smart workplaces is their potential to reduce an organisation's environmental footprint. Technologies like smart thermostats, lighting systems, and energy-efficient Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems enable com-

panies to minimise energy consumption and reduce waste (Manitsidou & Balogian-nis, 2018; Rousta, 2023). These innovations align with global sustainability goals and are becoming increasingly crucial for businesses seeking to meet environmental regulations and corporate social responsibility targets.

Furthermore, the integration of smart technologies into workplaces promotes sustainability in other forms, such as reducing the need for large office spaces by enabling remote work. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the shift to remote work led to a significant decrease in the number of employees commuting to and from physical workplaces like offices, resulting in substantial reductions in carbon emissions from transportation (Yang et al., 2021). As companies continue to embrace hybrid work models, the environmental impact of commuting may be further minimized, contributing to more sustainable business operations.

Studies have further demonstrated that when companies allow employees to work remotely, commuting is reduced, resulting in less traffic and pollution (Fayomi & Sani, 2022). Virtual work also helps lower carbon emissions by reducing the need to travel. It reduces the strain on our roads, leading to a healthier environment and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG, 2025). Technologies enable the stabilisation of lighting in office spaces by automatically adjusting the brightness based on the time of day and the available natural light (Aly et al., 2018). Employees can also control the amount of natural light by using automated blinds and rollers, which helps reduce eye strain and eliminate glare (Nagy et al., 2015), as cited in Papagiannidis and Marikyan (2020).

Judging from the existing literature, empirical evidence further suggests that employees are generally satisfied with the quality and intensity of light provided by automated dimmable lighting systems, as well as sustainable lighting solutions, and the resulting luminous conditions. With increased control over lighting, individuals can use lower levels without sacrificing visual comfort, leading to reduced energy consumption (Linhart & Scartezzini, 2011; Moore et al., 2002; Nagy et al., 2015; Obrecht et al., 2019). Advanced technologies in the workplace address the challenge of improving lighting conditions by maintaining employee autonomy through full automation (Remes et al., 2021). The ability to control environmental conditions creates adaptive opportunities for employees, especially those assigned to workstations with varying microclimates (Day et al., 2019), cited in Papagiannidis and Marikyan (2020).

From the reviewed studies, sustainability evidently interacts with HRM strategies in smart workplaces. In this case, HR plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of sustainability by integrating environmental goals into workplace policies and encouraging employees to adopt environmentally friendly practices (Verma et al., 2023). For example, HR can offer incentives to employees who participate in sustainable practices, such as reducing paper usage, recycling, or opting for virtual meetings instead of in-person meetings. One of the roles of HR is promoting sustainability, which encompasses training programs that educate employees about sustainability and how they can contribute to it both within and outside the workplace (Osello et al., 2023).

3.4. Cultural and Social Dimensions of Smart Workplaces in Qatar

Although much of the smart workplace literature originates from Western contexts, several studies emphasise the importance of contextual adaptation when transferring digital workplace models to non-Western environments. This is particularly relevant for Qatar, where sociocultural norms, labour market structures, and national development strategies differ significantly. Therefore, this review critically interprets global findings through the lens of Qatar's Vision 2030. The Qatar National Vision 2030 is a strategic framework launched in 2008, aimed at transforming Qatar into an advanced society capable of sustainable development. It is built on four interconnected pillars: Human Development, focusing on education and health; Social Development, emphasising cultural preservation and social cohesion; Economic Development, fostering a diverse and competitive economy; and Environmental Development, ensuring harmony between growth and environmental conservation. Together, these pillars balance modernisation with tradition while securing a sustainable future (GCO, 2022).

Culture is crucial in developing smart workplaces in Qatar. In the course of its implementation of Vision 2030, Qatar has embarked on a digital transformation across several sectors, ranging from government to the business environment. The smart use of technology should align with the cultural values that people tend to live by, prioritising community, family, and social cohesion (Pot, 2011). To achieve the vision, the State of Qatar has generated measurable medium-term strategies with objectives aligned with the 2030 goals. Now, as 2030 approaches, the country has built the final National Development Strategy 2024-2030 (GCO, 2025). Qatar Vision aims for technologies, innovation, and investment in human resources (GCO, 2022); therefore, the implementation of innovation requires a deep connection between workers and smart technologies, as technologies are the pivot of the smart workplace (Wiklund-Engblom et al., 2023).

The diverse workforce in Qatar presents unique challenges and opportunities for Human Resource Management (HRM) in the context of smart workplaces. While expatriates make up a significant portion of the workforce, Qatari nationals may have different expectations regarding work-life balance, career development, and workplace technology adoption (Osello et al, 2023). HRM strategies must be designed to cater to these diverse needs while promoting an inclusive work culture that values technological advancements without disregarding local traditions.

Smart workplaces in Qatar also need to consider the social implications of digitalisation. For instance, the rise of remote work and hybrid work models has been embraced in many parts of the world. Still, in Qatar, where in-person collaboration and physical office spaces remain highly valued, HR must ensure that remote work does not lead to feelings of isolation or reduced team cohesion (Chandrasekaran et al., 2024). This is particularly important in a country with a strong focus on community and collaboration, where the benefits of smart workplace technologies must be balanced with the need for human connection and social interaction (Dzhambinova, 2022).

Moreover, addressing environmental factors such as noise, temperature, and air quality remains crucial in creating a comfortable and productive smart workplace. HRM in Qatar should ensure that these factors are tailored to the unique cultural and environmental conditions of the region, particularly given the extreme heat and dust that can impact indoor air quality and employee health (Pot, 2011). Because the role of the smart workplace is to improve productivity, sustainability, and employees' well-being (Papagiannidis & Marikyan, 2020; Fayomi & Sani, 2022), it can support the achievement of this vision.

Notably, human development is a key focus of the National Development Strategy, which aims to enhance Qatar's workforce by designing high-quality educational programs, investing in training initiatives for both the private and public sectors, and increasing opportunities and vocational support for Qatari women (NPC, 2008). For example, the establishment of the Future Skills Office in 2024 aims to prepare a future-ready workforce capable of keeping pace with rapid economic and technological development (CGB, 2024).

In line with the Human and Social Development pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030 and following a proposal by the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau, the esteemed Council of Ministers has approved new working hours and a framework for organising them. This also includes introducing a remote work and flexible working hours system. This system aims to create an inspiring and flexible work environment, offering options that align with employees' family needs and professional duties, while enhancing the readiness of government entities and training employees to ensure business continuity under any circumstances. It enables government entities to train their employees for remote work, ensuring the delivery of services and the efficient completion of tasks. The targeted groups are government sector employees and employees with disabilities (CGB, 2024; The Peninsula, 2024).

In the Qatari context, cultural adaptation extends beyond general family values to include high power distance, collectivist orientations, and strong relational trust norms, which shape leadership expectations and workplace behaviour (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004; Mellahi, Budhwar, & Schuler, 2010). The literature indicates that employee acceptance of technological and organisational change in Gulf countries is strongly influenced by leadership endorsement, social norms, and trust-based relationships (Budhwar & Mellahi, 2016). Furthermore, alignment with national workforce policies, such as Qatarisation, and the influence of work ethics play a critical role in shaping employees' attitudes towards innovation and HR practices (Al Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2014; Ali, 1988). Therefore, HR policies in smart workplaces must be culturally responsive, ensuring that digital flexibility, performance management, and innovation practices are implemented in ways that respect local expectations and social structures.

Smart workplaces contribute by providing employees with access to innovative technologies that enhance learning, adaptability, and creativity (Schmid & Dowling, 2020). They can also support continuous education and skill development, ensuring employees are aligned with Qatar's evolving technological landscape. Accord-

ing to Papagiannidis and Marikyan (2020), smart technologies can enhance workplace learning, increase job satisfaction, and develop the skills necessary for a future-ready workforce. Therefore, it is essential to understand individual needs to effectively implement smart workplace technology, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications, the Internet of Things (IoT), and mobile devices (Schmid & Dowling, 2020).

4. Analysis and Conceptual Framework

The thematic synthesis of the literature reveals that the transition to smart workplaces is not merely a technological upgrade but a complex organizational transformation. The success of this transformation is critically dependent on a strategic and integrated HRM approach. Based on the interplay of themes identified in the literature review, we propose the integrated HRM framework for smart workplaces in transitional economies, as shown in **Figure 3**.
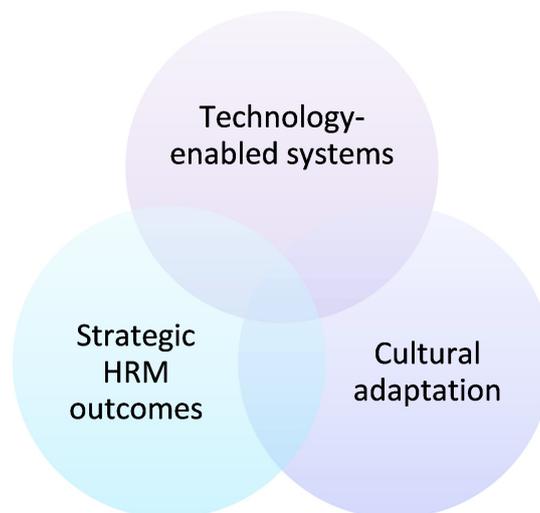

Figure 3. Integrated HRM framework for smart workplaces in transitional economies.

The proposed framework (**Figure 3**) posits that three core components must be synergistically aligned. The Technology-Enabled HRM Systems component involves the redesign of core HR functions. While the individual components of the framework reflect established organisational change concepts, the novelty of this framework lies in their integration through a human motivation lens, specifically within a non-Western, Gulf context. Unlike technology-driven smart workplace models, this framework positions HRM as the central enabler that aligns digital systems with cultural values and employee motivation. Our analysis shows that smart workplaces necessitate a shift in some specific ways. First, Performance Management involves moving from time-based to outcome-based metrics, leveraging data analytics while mitigating algorithmic bias. Secondly, Learning and Development involves implementing continuous, just-in-time virtual training and reskilling programs to bridge the digital skills gap. Third, Talent Acquisition involves utilizing

AI for recruitment while ensuring strategies attract a diverse workforce comfortable with a tech-infused environment.

The cultural adaptation component in the proposed framework is the mediating component, which is particularly crucial in such contexts as Qatar. It requires HRM to actively manage the intersection of global technological norms (such as working remotely and digital communication) and local sociocultural values, such as the importance of in-person collaboration, community, and family structure, as seen in Qatar's focus on work-life balance for female workers. In this case, HRM needs to tailor its technology implementation to ensure that it respects and incorporates local values while also preventing alienation and fostering inclusive adoption.

The HRM outcomes component involves the alignment of the first two components, which drive the achievement of key organizational and national objectives. First, enhanced employee well-being is achievable through flexible work arrangements and responsive environmental controls, while proactively addressing digital fatigue and isolation. Second, fostering innovation is achievable by creating a culture that supports risk-taking and knowledge-sharing within the smart workplace ecosystem. Third, sustainability is achievable by embedding environmental goals into HR policies (such as incentives for green behaviour) and leveraging technology for resource efficiency.

Overall, the proposed framework illustrates that neglecting any one component, for instance, implementing advanced technologies without cultural adaptation (leading to employee resistance) or focusing on well-being without supportive HR systems (leading to vague policies), will undermine the overall success of the smart workplace initiative. Qatar's journey provides an important case study of this integration, where the national strategy (Vision 2030) actively drives alignment among these components.

The workplace is undergoing a significant transformation driven by advancements in artificial intelligence, automation, and sustainability initiatives. Studies have shown that smart workplaces with smart solutions motivate employees and increase their productivity. This productivity improvement was facilitated by the office layout and the adoption of new technologies in modern offices (such as lighting systems, temperature control, conference rooms, and AI to enhance employee tasks), which enhance the work environment. Moreover, using hybrid work facilitates geographical distance. However, workplace flexibility in smart workplaces has increased the work-life balance. Still, there is a segment of employees who prefer to return to the office. For instance, a survey in India by NASSCOM (2021) reported that 50% of the workforce would like to return to the office, as the latest workplace model has been found to increase stress and anxiety (Shaw et al., 2020). COVID-19 raised the importance of Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies to motivate and develop the workforce.

Additionally, COVID-19 prompted revisions to HR policies, including the implementation of a remote work policy and virtual training. Therefore, the HR de-

partment and policymakers should prioritize workplace safety, employee engagement, and well-being initiatives. Gastaldi et al. (2014) noted that a smart workplace promotes flexibility and targeted employee engagement, as well as effectiveness and efficiency. Technology and digitalisation tools are the pivot of smart workplaces.

5. Key Findings and Research Gap

According to the literature review, some studies suggest that smart workplaces have enhanced communication among employees by improving engagement and collaboration and encouraging the sharing of knowledge. Moreover, they have enhanced the efficiency of tasks by utilising advanced technology, which affects productivity and well-being (Errichiello & Pianese, 2018, 2019; Papagiannidis & Marikyan, 2020; Raguseo et al., 2016; Veglianti et al., 2021; Hasiwar et al., 2024). Moreover, smart workplaces can support employee health by adopting a flexible working hours policy or allowing more than one break, which provides them with sufficient time to exercise physically and stay healthy (Chandrasekaran et al., 2024).

The literature also explores the relationship between the smart workplace and sustainability strategy, particularly emphasising that global sustainability goals are becoming increasingly crucial for businesses seeking to meet environmental regulations and corporate social responsibility targets. Smart technology, including intelligent automation systems for lighting, air conditioning, and printing, has been widely adopted in modern offices. This technology helps save energy, reduce electricity consumption, and minimise water waste, making it more eco-friendly. It also reduces the carbon footprint (Fayomi & Sani, 2022; DSDG, 2025). Studies have highlighted that using technology in smart workplaces can reduce costs (Giacobbe et al., 2023; Fayomi & Sani, 2022; Naqshbandi et al., 2023); however, some studies have mentioned that this technology may increase costs due to the need to transform traditional offices into modern ones, as well as the implementation of a cybersecurity system (Yang et al., 2021).

In the State of Qatar, the government has recently published a new law, which offers flexible working hours for government sectors to create a balance between two areas (private and professional), which enhances social life by giving women more time to look after their children and support family bonding. Aiming to improve the well-being of women workers and promote family bonding is one of the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030 (CGB, 2024; The Peninsula, 2024). Because the role of the smart workplace is to improve productivity, sustainability, and employees' well-being (Papagiannidis & Marikyan, 2020; Fayomi & Sani, 2022), it can support the achievement of this vision.

While some studies examine HR's role in digital transformation or localization of talent in Qatar, there is a need to adopt and integrate multi-source empirical evidence that combines citizen awareness, HR expert practices, and policy alignment with smart workplaces in Qatar, and shows how these affect job satisfaction,

employee productivity, well-being, and measures the relative performance.

The literature confirms that smart workplaces enhance communication, task efficiency, and support employee health through flexibility. They are also instrumental in advancing corporate sustainability goals. In Qatar, recent governmental policies explicitly linking flexible work to social development goals provide a strong institutional foundation for this transition.

However, a significant research gap persists. While some studies examine HR's role in digital transformation in the GCC, there is a scarcity of multi-source empirical evidence that quantitatively and qualitatively tests the relationships proposed in our framework. Therefore, it is suggested that future research investigate the causal links between specific Technology-Enabled HRM systems and employee outcomes like job satisfaction and innovation behavior in the Qatari context. Similarly, future studies should explore the relative effectiveness of different Cultural Adaptation strategies in mediating the impact of smart technologies on a diverse workforce. In addition, future research should use longitudinal studies to track the performance of organizations that successfully align all three components of the framework versus those that do not.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research highlights the transformative potential of smart workplaces in shaping the future of work, particularly within the context of Qatar's Vision 2030. The integration of technologies such as AI and IoT has the potential to significantly enhance HRM strategies, promoting employee well-being, innovation, and sustainability. Smart workplaces not only improve organisational efficiency but also contribute to a more flexible and inclusive work environment, promoting work-life balance and minimising environmental impact. However, the successful implementation of these technologies requires a strategic approach by HRM, ensuring that employees are equipped with the necessary skills and are supported through continuous learning and reskilling programs. Additionally, the study emphasises that the challenges of transitioning to smart workplaces are numerous: data privacy and employee engagement, to name just two, and yet the gains down the track far outweigh these initial difficulties of transition. The linking of HRM strategy to organisational strategy and the adoption of technology can help organisations in Qatar and the region enhance employee satisfaction, contribute to sustainable economic development, and support the nation's ambitious goals, including those outlined in the 2030 Agenda and beyond.

7. Future Research

Despite growing interest in smart workplaces, a critical disconnect remains in the literature, particularly within the Qatar and GCC contexts, between public perceptions, HR-led strategic implementation, and sustainability outcomes. To address this gap, future research should employ a mixed-methods approach combining public surveys, HR expert interviews, and strategic analysis to develop a framework

that informs both local strategy and global scholarship on smart workplace implementation. Future research should empirically validate the proposed framework through a mixed-methods approach in the Qatari context. First, quantitative surveys should be used to measure employee perceptions of HRM practices, cultural alignment, and well-being outcomes across organizations at different stages of smart workplace adoption. Secondly, qualitative interviews, such as in-depth interviews with HR leaders and policymakers, will help to understand the challenges and strategies of implementing the framework's components. Third, comparative case studies will help in examining organizations within Qatar and the wider GCC that exemplify strong or weak alignment with the framework to identify best practices and pitfalls.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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