

## POST COVID TRANSFORMATION OF HR IN IBADAT INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD: A CASE STUDY OF DIGITALIZATION, JOB SECURITY AND EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

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### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic pushed universities around the world to quickly change their Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, but there isn't much research that looks at how these changes have happened in Pakistani higher education institutions. This study looks at how HR practices at Ibadat International University, Islamabad (IIUI) have changed after the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on three connected areas: making HR processes more digital, ensuring employees feel secure in their jobs, and improving their overall well-being. The study uses a qualitative case study approach, based on Systems Theory, and collects data through interviews with faculty members, HR officers, and administrative staff. The data is then examined using thematic analysis. The study shows that IIUI used several digital HR tools like online systems for tracking attendance, platforms for managing learning, software for virtual meetings, websites for hiring new staff, and digital systems for handling pay and leave. Together, these tools helped

make administrative work more efficient, transparent, and better at communicating. However, employees continued to face issues like not enough technical training, more work than they could handle, and problems with getting used to new technologies too soon. Because of the pandemic, workers became more worried about keeping their jobs and whether their contracts would be renewed. The university tried to ease these worries by being open and honest, and by focusing on keeping employees rather than letting people go. This helped keep people's spirits up. However, the workers still wanted the university to create clearer and more permanent rules about job security. In terms of employee well-being, programs like online counseling, mental health webinars, and flexible work options were found to help reduce stress, but using digital tools a lot

also led to more screen time, unclear lines between work and personal life, and burnout, showing that better structured well-being plans are needed. The study finds that digitizing HR at IIUI has made the institution more efficient and better able to handle challenges. However, it also says that keeping these changes working well over time will require combining new technology with policies that focus on employees' needs, like ensuring job security, managing workloads, and offering support for mental health. This research adds to the increasing number of studies about how universities are changing their human resource management after the pandemic and gives real-world advice to university leaders who want to create more sustainable and employee-centered HR practice.

**Keywords:** Digitalization, Job Security and Employee Wellbeing

## INTRODUCTION:

### 1.1 Background Of The Study:

Human Resource Management plays a vital role in optimizing the use of human capital within organizations (Dessler, 2020). The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic compelled organizations, including universities, to transition swiftly from traditional HR practices to more digital and flexible approaches. In the context of Pakistan, higher education institutions encountered considerable operational disruptions, which required universities such as Ibadat International University (IIUI) to restructure their HR systems in order to facilitate remote working arrangements, ensure employee safety, and maintain institutional operations during the crisis (HEC, 2020).

Human Resource Management entails the proper management of employees in a manner that will help the organization to meet its objectives; such as recruitment, training, performance management and welfare of employees. The COVID-19 pandemic upset the conventional working patterns and forced companies to implement digitalization and flexible working styles to keep operations going (Armstrong, 2020). Pakistan Higher education institutions were under severe operations due to the pandemic, such as campus closures and the necessity to work remotely. One of those requirements was the revising of HR policies and administrative processes in such a way that it would maintain continuity of both academic and non-academic operations (Higher Education Commission [HEC], 2020). As a reaction, Ibadat International University implemented a number of HR changes that have persisted in the post-COVID period, and it ensures the need to assess their efficiency.

Besides that, the pandemic revealed the flaws in the current HR systems, especially the absence of technology preparedness and support systems towards employees. Universities became more commonly dependent on online communication, recruitment, and monitoring of their performance, making the HR departments less of an administrative unit and more a strategic partner in times of crisis (Armstrong, 2020).

Moreover, the post-COVID climate raised the performance expectations on the part of HR

departments toward the support of employees and their transparency as well as job security. Workers have grown used to institutions offering flexible working hours and policies that allow them to work, which increases the transformation of the HR as a long-term organizational need and not an answer to a specific demand (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the HR practices in the majority of Pakistani universities were based on manually conducted systems and face-to-face communication. There was inefficiency and time wastage in administrative processes like recruitment and employee record management. The pandemic encouraged the use of digital communication tools and HR information systems in institutions of higher learning.

Many Pakistani colleges' HR procedures relied heavily on manual methods and face-to-face contacts prior to the COVID-19 outbreak (Khan & Anjum, 2019). The epidemic accelerated the transition to online hiring procedures, virtual communication, and electronic record keeping. In order to maintain operations and be competitive in the post-pandemic climate, Ibadat International University (IIUI), a developing private-sector school, has to update and modernize its HR processes (Armstrong, 2020).

Being a privately-owned university, IIUI had to modernize its HR practices to be functional in the post pandemic environment. This was a major change in the HR management approach of the university and was in line with the modern HR practices.

### 1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the swift integration of digital HR tools during the COVID-19 pandemic, many universities continue to lack well-structured frameworks to address long-term Human Resource challenges, particularly those related to job security and employee well-being (ILO, 2021). At Ibadat International University (IIUI), there is limited documented, case-based evidence on post-COVID HR transformation, resulting in a knowledge gap regarding the effectiveness of recently implemented HR practices. This study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing post-COVID Human

Resource Management at IIUI, with specific focus on HR digitalization, job security, and employee well-being (WHO, 2020).

### 1.3 Research Objectives:

To examine the level of Human Resource digitalization at Ibadat International University (IIUI) in the post-COVID-19 period.

To analyze the effects of post-pandemic HR practices on employee job security at IIUI.

To assess the employee well-being initiatives implemented by IIUI following the COVID19 pandemic.

### 1.4 Research Questions:

This research aims at answering the following questions:

1. What is the role of HR digitalization in HR practices in Ibadat International University during the post-COVID period?

2. How has the post-COVID HR affected the job security of the employees?

3. what extent are the post-COVID-19 employee well-being initiatives effective?

4. What are the issues that IIUI has to overcome to maintain post-COVID HR change?

### 1.5 Significance Of The Study:

This study is significant as it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on **post-COVID Human Resource Management transformation**, particularly within the context of higher education institutions in Pakistan. By focusing on a single university case, the research provides detailed and context-specific insights into how HR practices have evolved in response to a global crisis.

The findings of this study are valuable for **university administrators and HR practitioners**, as they highlight effective digital HR practices while identifying gaps in employee job security and well-being programs. The study can assist policymakers and institutional leaders in designing more sustainable, employee-centered HR strategies for the post-pandemic era.

Academically, the research adds to HRM and organizational change literature by linking crisis-driven transformation with long-term HR sustainability. It also serves as a reference for future researchers who wish to explore HR

digitalization and employee well-being in higher education or similar organizational settings.

### 2.1 Literature Review:

According to existing research, post-COVID HRM places a heavy emphasis on employee-centered policies, workforce flexibility, and digital transformation (Armstrong, 2020). While job security is still a major problem in contract-based employment arrangements that are typical in higher education institutions, digital HR technologies improve efficiency and transparency (ILO, 2021). Additionally, because of the increasing psychological stress during the pandemic, employee well-being has become a strategic HR focus (WHO, 2020).

Nonetheless, job security is a burning issue in institutions of higher learning whereby most jobs are initiated in form of contracts. The pandemic made the workplace more uncertain, which added to staff worries about their jobs, and now HR departments need to implement policies with a retention focus (ILO, 2021).

Besides, the well-being of the employees has become a strategic HR priority in the post-pandemic period. The burden of work, mental fatigue, and work-life crunch have impacted the performance of employees negatively, which underscores the necessity of implemented formal well-being programs (WHO, 2020).

It has been reported in the existing literature that post-COVID Human Resource Management is based on digital transformation and flexibility of the workforce. Digital HR systems make the processes of HR more efficient, transparent, and coordinated, specifically in service-based companies like universities (Armstrong, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation in Human Resource Management, especially in educational institutions. Universities adopted online HR systems, virtual communication tools, and remote working models to maintain operations during the crisis (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Digital HR practices improved efficiency, communication, and administrative coordination within organizations (Armstrong, 2020).

At the same time, employee well-being and job security became major concerns for HR

departments. Employees faced stress, workload pressure, and uncertainty about their jobs due to remote work and organizational changes (WHO, 2020). To address these issues, many institutions introduced flexible work arrangements, online counseling, and supportive HR policies to improve employee motivation and work-life balance (Guest, 2017).

The literature also highlights that post-COVID HR transformation is now considered a long-term organizational strategy rather than a temporary response to the pandemic. However, challenges such as resistance to change, limited training, and technological barriers still affect the sustainability of HR reforms in many institutions (ILO, 2021).

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework:

The current study is premised on the Human Resource Management transformation framework that describes how external crises like the COVID-19 pandemic affect the way HR is practiced at the organization. Crisis circumstances are the drivers of change in organizations that compel institutions to update archaic HR systems and implement dynamic and technology-oriented methods (Armstrong, 2020).

Three major categories of the framework are based on digitalizing Human Resource, ensuring employee job security, and focusing on employee well-being. HR digitalization is the main organizational reaction to operational shocks by providing institutions like IIUI with the opportunity to organize recruitment, communication and training during and after the pandemic.

The outcome variables of the framework entail employee job security and employee well-being. Good HR policies, such as good communication and retention strategies affect how employees feel about the stability of their jobs and organizational support (ILO, 2021). Likewise, HR transformation can be associated with employee well-being because technological transformations should be accompanied by HR policies centered on individuals to overcome psychological and health-related issues (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020).

On the whole, this framework gives a systematic ground on which to interpret the manner in which

post-COVID HR practices at IIUI can be concluded to relate to the wider HR transformation theory.

### 2.2.1 Systems Theory

Systems Theory, originally developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) and later applied to organizational management by scholars such as Katz and Kahn (1978), provides a foundational lens through which the post-COVID HR transformation at Ibadat International University (IIUI) can be analyzed. Systems Theory conceptualizes an organization as an open system composed of interrelated subsystems inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback loops that continuously interact with the external environment. This perspective is particularly relevant to the current study, as the COVID-19 pandemic acted as a major environmental disruption that forced IIUI's internal HR system to adapt, restructure, and realign its practices in response to an unprecedented external shock.

Within the Systems Theory framework, IIUI can be understood as an open organizational system in which the HR department operates as a critical subsystem. The inputs to this system include human capital (faculty and administrative staff), institutional policies, financial resources, and technological infrastructure. The processes involve HR functions such as recruitment, performance management, training, and employee support. The outputs include employee productivity, job satisfaction, institutional efficiency, and overall organizational performance. The feedback mechanism consists of employee responses, policy evaluations, and performance reviews, all of which inform future HR decisions.

COVID-19 pandemic introduced significant environmental turbulence, prompting the HR subsystem at IIUI to respond through digitalization, revised job security policies, and enhanced employee well-being programs. Systems Theory explains why these changes were not isolated decisions but rather interconnected organizational responses: a change in one subsystem (e.g., shifting recruitment online) inevitably affected other subsystems (e.g., employee training needs, communication channels, and workload distribution). This

interconnectedness supports the study's holistic examination of HR transformation, rather than treating digitalization, job security, and well-being as independent variables (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

### 1. **HR Digitalization :**

HR Digitalization refers to the use of technology and digital systems in Human Resource Management functions such as recruitment, attendance, communication, payroll, training, and performance management. After COVID-19, universities increasingly shifted from manual HR processes to digital systems to continue operations effectively during lockdowns and remote work situations (Armstrong, 2020).

HR digitalization helps organizations improve efficiency, transparency, accuracy, and communication among employees. Digital tools such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), online attendance systems, Zoom meetings, and e-recruitment portals reduce paperwork and make HR operations faster and more flexible. In higher education institutions, digital HR systems also support remote teaching, virtual meetings, and employee coordination (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

However, HR digitalization also creates some challenges. Employees may face technical problems, internet issues, lack of digital skills, and increased workload due to constant online availability. Therefore, organizations must provide technical training and continuous support to ensure successful implementation of digital HR practices (Raghuram et al., 2019).

### 2. **Job Security :**

Job Security refers to employees' feelings of stability, safety, and confidence regarding the continuity of their employment. It reflects whether employees believe their jobs are secure and protected from layoffs, contract termination, or financial uncertainty. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many employees experienced fear and uncertainty because organizations faced operational and economic challenges (ILO, 2021). In the post-COVID period, HR departments play an important role in improving employees' sense of job security through transparent communication, flexible policies, and supportive

management practices. Employees feel more secure when organizations clearly communicate employment policies, contract renewals, and future organizational plans.

Job security is directly linked with employee motivation, loyalty, and organizational commitment. When employees feel insecure about their jobs, their stress levels increase, and their productivity may decrease. Therefore, organizations must develop effective HR policies that protect employees and create trust within the workplace (Dessler, 2020).

### 3. **Employee Well-Being :**

Employee Well-Being refers to the physical, mental, and emotional health of employees in the workplace. It includes factors such as stress management, job satisfaction, work-life balance, emotional support, and overall quality of working life. After COVID-19, employee well-being became a major focus of HR departments because remote work, isolation, and increased workload negatively affected employees' mental health (WHO, 2020).

Organizations introduced different well-being initiatives such as flexible work schedules, online counseling sessions, mental health awareness programs, and supportive workplace policies to reduce stress and improve employee morale. Employee well-being is important because healthy and satisfied employees are more productive, motivated, and committed to organizational goals (Guest, 2017).

However, excessive use of digital tools and remote working arrangements may also create problems such as burnout, mental fatigue, and poor work-life balance. Employees often experience pressure from continuous online communication and increased screen time. Therefore, organizations must maintain a balance between digital efficiency and employee well-being to ensure long-term organizational sustainability (Oakman et al., 2020).

#### 3.1 **Research Methodology:**

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to examine the post-COVID transformation of Human Resource Management at Ibadat International University (IIUI), Islamabad. A

qualitative approach is suitable for this research as it allows an in-depth understanding of institutional practices, policies, and organizational responses rather than numerical measurement. The focus of the study is to explore how HR digitalization, employee job security, and well-being initiatives have evolved in the post-pandemic context.

### 3.2 Population and Sample:

Population of this study is HR Faculty. Sample of this research was 3 employees of HR department and secondary data. Semi-structured discussions revealed that faculty appreciated the adoption of digital HR systems, including online attendance, virtual meetings, digital documentation, and learning management platforms, which improved administrative efficiency, transparency, and communication. However, challenges such as increased workload, limited technical training, and initial adaptation difficulties were noted. Faculty recommended regular professional development programs to enhance digital competence, clearer communication of HR policies and performance evaluation criteria, flexible HR policies to support work-life balance, mental health support, and transparent feedback mechanisms. Overall, the interviews highlighted both the successes of post-COVID HR reforms and areas needing further improvement.

### 3.3 Research Design:

The research design used in this study is a **qualitative case study design**. A case study enables the researcher to conduct a detailed and contextual investigation of HR practices within a real-life organizational setting. IIUI has been selected as a single-case study because of its active implementation of HR reforms during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This design is appropriate as the aim is to gain analytical insights rather than statistical generalization (Yin, 2018).

### 3.4 Procedure:

The research procedure for this study was carried out systematically to ensure clarity, reliability, and alignment with the research objectives. Initially, a comprehensive review of relevant literature was conducted to understand existing theories and

studies related to Human Resource Management transformation, particularly in the post-COVID context. This helped in refining the research focus and developing a conceptual understanding of HR digitalization, employee job security, and well-being.

In the second stage, secondary data was collected through document analysis. Official HR policy documents, institutional reports, administrative guidelines, and circulars of Ibadat International University were reviewed. Additionally, policy documents and reports from regulatory and international organizations such as the Higher Education Commission (HEC), International Labour Organization (ILO), and World Health Organization (WHO) were examined to provide contextual support and comparison.

data collection, the documents were carefully screened and organized based on relevance to the research objectives. The collected data were then coded and categorized into major themes, including HR digitalization, employee job security, and employee well-being. Thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns and meaningful insights. Finally, the findings were interpreted in light of the theoretical framework to draw conclusions and develop recommendations for sustainable post-COVID HR practices.

### 3.5 Research Instruments:

This research relies on document analysis as the primary research instrument. To gather secondary data, institutional reports, HR policy documents, official guidelines, and other academic literature were reviewed. These records were a source of information about HR practice, changes in policies and how organizations were reacting to their post-COVID issues.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

#### Thematic Analysis

The themes of thematic analysis, meaning identifying, analyzing, and interpreting recurrent patterns in the data, have been used to analyze the data collected. The essential themes were identified and analyzed in terms of the research objectives such as the HR digitalization, employee job security, employee well-being. The thematic analysis allowed carrying out a systematic

interpretation of qualitative data and conducted a meaningful discussion of the post-COVID HR transformation (Yin, 2018).

**Data collection outline:**

**Semi-Structured Interview Questions:**

**Purpose of This Instrument:**

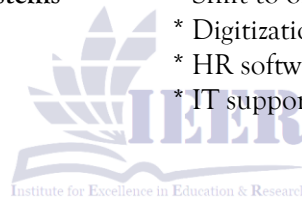
These 20 semi-structured interview questions are designed to collect qualitative primary data from faculty and HR staff at IIUI. They are organized into four thematic sections aligned with the

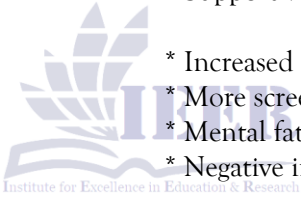
study's research objectives and theoretical framework (Systems Theory & TAM). Each question is open-ended to encourage detailed, experience-based responses. And related to HR Digitalization, Job Security, Employee Well-being and Challenges, Sustainability & Recommendations.

**Target Respondents:** Faculty members, HR officers, and administrative staff at IIUI.

**Themes and Categories of Interview Responses**

Theme	Subordinate Theme
Introduction of Digital HR Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Online attendance systems</li> <li>* LMS platforms (Moodle, Google Classroom)</li> <li>* Virtual meeting tools (Zoom, Microsoft Teams)</li> <li>* E-recruitment systems</li> <li>* Digital payroll and leave management</li> </ul>
Transition from Manual to Digital Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Shift to online teaching and meetings</li> <li>* Digitization of employee records</li> <li>* HR software implementation</li> <li>* IT support and staff training</li> </ul>
Benefits of Digitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Faster HR processes</li> <li>* Improved efficiency and convenience</li> <li>* Better communication and coordination</li> <li>* Easier document access and scheduling</li> </ul>
Challenges in Digital Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Lack of technical knowledge</li> <li>* Internet connectivity issues</li> <li>* Technical glitches</li> <li>* Resistance to change among staff</li> </ul>
Training and Institutional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Webinars and online tutorials</li> <li>* IT assistance</li> <li>* Need for continuous and structured training programs</li> </ul>
Employee Concerns about Job Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Increased uncertainty during COVID-19</li> <li>* Fear of job instability</li> <li>* Concerns about contracts and renewals</li> </ul>
HR Communication and Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Official emails and notices</li> <li>* Transparent communication regarding policies</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Regular updates from HR department</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional Response to Employment Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Focus on employment continuity</li> <li>* Professional handling of staff concerns</li> <li>* Limited layoffs and supportive approach</li> </ul>
<b>Post-COVID HR Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Flexible work arrangements</li> <li>* Contract extensions</li> <li>* Need for stronger job security policies</li> </ul>
<b>: Impact of Digital Work Arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Increased flexibility</li> <li>* Higher workload</li> <li>* Blurred work-life boundaries</li> <li>* Concerns about monitoring and stability</li> </ul>
<b>Well-Being and Mental Health Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Online counseling sessions</li> <li>* Health awareness webinars</li> <li>* Flexible work schedules</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness of Well-Being Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Reduced employee stress</li> <li>* Improved motivation and morale</li> <li>* Supportive work environment</li> </ul>
<b>Impact of Remote and Hybrid Work</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Increased flexibility</li> <li>* More screen time</li> <li>* Mental fatigue and stress</li> <li>* Negative impact on work-life balance</li> </ul>
<b>Employee Feedback Mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Surveys and meetings</li> <li>* Open communication channels</li> <li>* Positive management response</li> </ul>
<b>Workload and Burnout Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Continuous online availability</li> <li>* Increased digital tasks</li> <li>* Limited institutional efforts to reduce burnout</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges in Sustaining HR Reforms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Resistance to change</li> <li>* Financial limitations</li> <li>* Lack of long-term HR strategies</li> <li>* Insufficient employee training</li> </ul>
<b>Impact of Digitalization on Other HR Functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Improved communication</li> <li>* Better training opportunities</li> <li>* Enhanced performance management</li> <li>* Increased departmental coordination</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness of Post-COVID HR Changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Improved operational efficiency</li> <li>* Increased institutional resilience</li> <li>* Partial employee satisfaction</li> </ul>

### Recommendations for Future Improvement

- \* Advanced HRMS systems
- \* Regular training programs
- \* Strong mental health support
- \* Clear job security policies
- \* Workload management frameworks

### Overall Reflection on HR Transformation

- \* Digitalization improved efficiency
- \* New challenges emerged (stress, insecurity)
- \* Need for balance between technology and employee well-being

The responses show that IIUI adopted different digital HR systems during and after COVID-19 to continue work smoothly and reduce dependence on physical offices. Tools like online attendance systems, LMS platforms, virtual meetings, e-recruitment, and digital payroll systems improved efficiency and made HR processes faster and more convenient. The transition from manual systems to digital platforms was gradual and supported by online training sessions, webinars, and IT assistance. Although employees initially faced problems such as internet issues, lack of technical knowledge, and unfamiliarity with digital platforms, most employees became comfortable with the systems over time. Overall, digitalization positively improved HR operations, communication, and work management, but there is still a need for more continuous training and technical support.

The responses indicate that employee job security was negatively affected during the COVID-19 pandemic because of uncertainty and changing work conditions. However, in the post-COVID period, employees gradually started feeling more stable and secure. IIUI maintained communication with employees through official notices and emails, which helped reduce confusion and anxiety. The university also tried to avoid layoffs and focused on supporting employees through flexible work arrangements and policy adjustments. Despite these efforts, some concerns about long-term job security still remain. Additionally, digital and remote work increased workload and created challenges in maintaining work-life balance, which affected employees' overall sense of stability.

The responses show that IIUI introduced some employee well-being and mental health initiatives after COVID-19, such as online counseling sessions, health awareness webinars, and flexible work schedules. These initiatives helped employees reduce stress and continue their work during difficult times. Employees generally appreciated the supportive environment provided by the university. However, increased use of digital tools and remote work also created new challenges, including stress, mental fatigue, longer screen time, and poor work-life balance. HR departments actively collected employee feedback through meetings and surveys, but employees believe stronger well-being programs and better burnout management strategies are still needed.

The responses suggest that IIUI still faces several challenges in maintaining post-COVID HR reforms. These challenges include resistance to change, financial limitations, insufficient employee training, and the absence of a long-term digital HR strategy. At the same time, digitalization positively improved communication, training, coordination, and performance management across departments. Overall, the post-COVID HR changes moderately improved institutional efficiency, employee satisfaction, and organizational resilience. Employees recommend that the university introduce advanced HR systems, stronger mental health support, regular training programs, clear job security policies, and better workload management practices. The responses also highlight that while digital transformation improved efficiency, organizations must balance technology with employee well-being and human needs for sustainable HR development.

#### 4.1 Results:

The findings of this study indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly transformed Human Resource Management practices at Ibadat International University. The university adopted several digital HR practices to ensure continuity of operations during and after the pandemic. The results are organized according to the three major themes of the study: HR digitalization, job security, and employee well-being.

##### **HR Digitalization:**

The study found that IIUI successfully introduced multiple digital HR tools, including online attendance systems, Learning Management Systems (LMS), virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, and digital documentation systems. These tools improved communication, administrative efficiency, and coordination among employees.

Faculty members and HR staff reported that digitalization reduced paperwork and made HR processes faster and more transparent. Employees appreciated the convenience of online meetings, digital leave management, and easier access to institutional information.

However, the findings also revealed several challenges. Some employees faced technical difficulties, internet connectivity problems, and lack of digital skills during the initial transition phase. Resistance to change among some staff members was also identified as a barrier to smooth implementation. Although IIUI provided technical support and online training sessions, respondents emphasized the need for continuous professional development programs to improve digital competence.

##### **Job Security:**

The findings show that employee job security became a major concern during the pandemic period. Many employees experienced uncertainty regarding employment continuity, contract renewals, and organizational stability.

The HR department attempted to reduce employee anxiety through regular communication, official notices, and transparent updates regarding institutional policies. Most respondents stated that

IIUI adopted a supportive approach and tried to avoid layoffs wherever possible.

Employees acknowledged that flexible work arrangements and digital work systems helped maintain organizational operations. However, some respondents believed that increased digital monitoring and changing work structures created additional pressure and concerns regarding long-term job stability.

Overall, the findings suggest that effective communication and supportive HR policies positively influenced employees' sense of security, although stronger long-term job protection policies are still required.

##### **Employee Well-Being:**

The study found that employee well-being became an important strategic priority after COVID-19. IIUI introduced several initiatives to support employees, including flexible work schedules, online counselling sessions, health awareness webinars, and open communication channels.

Respondents reported that these initiatives helped reduce stress and improved employee morale to some extent. Flexible work arrangements allowed employees to manage personal and professional responsibilities more effectively.

Despite these improvements, employees also reported negative effects associated with digital work practices. Increased screen time, continuous online availability, workload pressure, and poor work-life balance contributed to mental fatigue and stress. Some employees believed that institutional efforts to reduce burnout were still limited.

The findings indicate that employee well-being programs were beneficial but require further strengthening to ensure long-term sustainability and employee satisfaction.

#### 4.2 Discussion:

The results of this study are consistent with existing literature on post-COVID Human Resource Management transformation. The findings support the argument of Armstrong (2020) that digital HR systems improve organizational efficiency, flexibility, and communication.

The adoption of online HR tools at IIUI reflects the global shift toward digital transformation in educational institutions after the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to the findings of McKinsey & Company (2021), the study demonstrates that digital HR practices enabled organizations to maintain continuity during crisis situations.

From the perspective of Systems Theory, the changes introduced in one HR function affected other organizational processes. For example, the implementation of digital HR systems improved communication and performance management but also increased employee workload and training requirements. This confirms the interconnected nature of organizational subsystems explained by Katz and Kahn (1978).

The findings regarding job security are also supported by the International Labour Organization (2021), which emphasized that employees experienced uncertainty and fear regarding employment stability during the pandemic. At IIUI, transparent communication and supportive HR policies helped reduce employee concerns, although some insecurity still remained.

Similarly, the study aligns with WHO (2020) and Guest (2017), who highlighted the growing importance of employee well-being in modern HR management. Flexible work arrangements and mental health support programs positively affected employee morale; however, excessive digital workload created stress and burnout issues.

Overall, the discussion suggests that post-COVID HR transformation at IIUI produced both positive outcomes and new organizational challenges. While digitalization improved operational efficiency and institutional resilience, balancing technology with employee well-being remains a critical challenge for long-term HR sustainability.

#### **Conclusion:**

This study examined the post-COVID transformation of Human Resource Management at Ibadat International University with specific focus on HR digitalization, employee job security, and employee well-being.

The findings conclude that the COVID-19 pandemic acted as a major catalyst for HR transformation within the university. IIUI

adopted digital HR systems and flexible work practices that improved communication, efficiency, and administrative coordination. The transition from manual systems to digital platforms enabled the university to maintain continuity during and after the pandemic.

The study also concludes that employee job security and well-being became central concerns in post-COVID HR management. Supportive communication, flexible work policies, and well-being initiatives helped employees adapt to organizational changes. However, challenges such as workload pressure, burnout, technical difficulties, and uncertainty regarding long-term job stability still exist.

Furthermore, the research highlights that successful HR transformation requires a balance between technological advancement and employee-centered policies. Digitalization alone cannot ensure organizational sustainability unless employees receive proper support, training, and psychological well-being assistance.

Overall, the study demonstrates that post-COVID HR transformation at IIUI has positively contributed to organizational resilience and modernization, but continuous improvement is necessary to achieve sustainable and employee-friendly HR practices.

#### **Limitations of the Study:**

1. The study was limited to a single institution, Ibadat International University, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other universities or organizations.
2. The research used a qualitative case study approach; therefore, the findings are based on perceptions and experiences rather than large-scale statistical analysis.
3. Time limitations restricted the scope of data collection and analysis.
4. Some respondents may have provided socially desirable responses during interviews, which could affect the objectivity of the findings.
5. The study focused mainly on HR digitalization, job security, and employee well-being, while other important HR factors such as employee performance, leadership, and organizational culture were not examined in detail.

6. Rapid technological and organizational changes in the post-COVID environment may influence HR practices in the future, which means the findings may change over time.

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