

How Digital Transformation Affects International Employee Adjustment: Literature Review

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Abstract

Globalization is making international employees (IE) part of every industry and occupation. Many studies have been done in the last thirty years trying to understand and analyse the adjustment and the factors that influence it in a workplace or in social settings, in relation to family or community, and to host or home country nationals. The COVID-19 pandemic shook the world with lockdowns and limitations that forced businesses to turn to digital transformation as part of survival in many cases more rapidly than was planned. Global mobility is evolving into virtual global mobility (VGM), which requires new insights into IE adjustment.

The purpose of our study was to provide an overview of the research carried out to analyse how digital transformation influences the adjustment of IE. We reviewed articles in the Web of Science database management category during the 1990-2021 period and used MAXQDA software for abstract content analysis.

The findings of our study highlight that the topic of digital transformation in association with IE adjustment is under-researched within the management field; only 11 articles out of 1044 reviewed were related to digital transformation that influences IE adjustment. In-depth analysis of articles showed that digital technology for social networks, portals with shared international experiences for training purposes, and contemporary digital communication technologies for keeping in touch with family back home are elements of digital transformation that affect IE adjustment. In conclusion, future research needs to be expanded to digital transformation and the new reality of IE adjustment.

Keywords: Digital transformation, international employees, adjustment, literature review