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# Workplace Flexibility: Identifying New Trends and Directions from the Grey Literature Sources

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**Background and purpose:** This literature review examines labour market trends, focusing on workplace flexibility. It analyses grey literature and statistical reports to understand the impact of policies promoting sustainable digitisation. The analysis seeks to understand how these strategies have influenced labour market dynamics.

**Methodology:** The research utilised descriptive and compilation techniques to analyse grey literature, focusing on theoretical frameworks and temporal trends. It analysed non-traditional publications, reports, and statistical data to understand emerging labour market trends, particularly workplace flexibility and sustainable digitisation policies. This approach provided unique insights beyond traditional academic publications.

**Results:** Three major themes were identified by the review of grey literature sources. First is the impact of digitalisation on the labour market, the second is flexible working arrangements, and the third is working time flexibility.

**Conclusion:** The digital revolution transforms lifestyles and practices, leading to novel work forms. The pandemic has accelerated this trend, focusing on digitisation for work optimisation and flexibility. These new work forms increase productivity efficiency and reduce operational costs. Technological integration affects work quality and employee competencies, influencing the workforce's needs.

**Keywords:** *Flexible forms of work, Flexible working hours, Digital workplaces, Digital skills, Grey literature sources*

## 1 Introduction

Flexible employment encompasses a wide range of non-standard work arrangements, including part-time, temporary, and self-employment, as well as freelancing, subcontracting, and teleworking (Felstead & Jewson, 1999). It can introduce insecurity and upskilling opportunities, depending on the type of flexibility (Barbieri, 2009). However, it has hidden costs, such as low-productivity jobs and increased inequality (Rubery et al., 2016). Legislative reforms and measures are needed to balance flexibility, stability, and worker protection (Shibata, 2022).

As defined by Hill et al. (2008), work flexibility re-

fers to workers' ability to choose when, where, and how long they engage in work-related tasks. This concept is crucial in operations management, where it is used to manage labour capacities and capabilities to mitigate system imbalances caused by uncertainties and changes (Qin et al., 2015). In the workplace, flexibility can be a coping mechanism for workers, allowing them to create short-term opportunities for flexibility within a structured environment (Root & Young, 2011). It is also associated with better self-reported health, although it may not necessarily reduce organisational healthcare costs (Butler et al., 2009).

New forms of work are global expansion and include platform work, employee sharing, job sharing, i.e. part-

time work, casual work, mobile work based on ICT, i.e. digital nomads, internal management, i.e. hiring workers, portfolio work. All this follows the development of talents as a human resources development model that offers opportunities for retraining and continuous improvement. Digitisation (Tretter & Burns, 2023) makes the boundaries of business extraction more and more flexible. However, Kossek and Michel's (2011) research on work flexibility describes the significant benefits for women of family planning, opportunities for work and education, and longer absences from work to recover from serious illnesses or during military service. Expectations about where and when someone should work can change as work moves into non-working hours, and employees struggle to live a predictable life outside of work, as Kossek et al. (2021) concluded.

A range of studies have explored the concept of flexible employment, with Bessa and Tomlinson (2017) identifying key themes and debates in this area. Morley et al. (1995) and Rodgers (2007) both caution against oversimplifying the relationship between labour market flexibility and employment, with Morley et al. (1995) noting a trend towards greater flexibilisation in the Irish labour market and Rodgers (2007) emphasising the need to consider flexibility within a wider framework of policies and institutions. Bal and Jansen (2016) emphasise the need for a joint approach to negotiating workplace flexibility, particularly for older workers. Collectively, these studies underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with flexible employment. These are just a few examples of the literature reviews on flexible employment (e.g. Omondi & K'obonyo, 2018). However, these literature reviews were based on academic papers. Conversely, grey literature, particularly commercial white papers, can be a valuable source of information for business practitioners and can be accessed through online databases and search engines (Juricek, 2009).

Grey literature, which includes research reports and government publications, is a valuable resource for studying business issues (Paez, 2017). It can provide data not found in commercially published literature, reducing publication bias and increasing the comprehensiveness of reviews (Paez, 2017). However, there are challenges in accessing and preserving this type of literature, particularly regarding diversity and digital preservation (Marsolek et al., 2021). Despite these challenges, grey literature can be useful in validating research-based literature search results (Benzies et al., 2006).

The main aim of this article is to identify and analyse trends pertaining to the sustainable implementation of digitisation policies and initiatives based on the grey literature review. This analysis is based on grey literature sources, encompassing past research and data studies published by consulting companies, government bodies and international organisations. The research is specifically centred on

comprehending the impact of digital technologies on the labour market, particularly in improving workplace flexibility.

The study aims to present a comprehensive perspective on the current dynamics of the labour market, emphasising digital technology's crucial influence on future work practices and regulations. This comprehensive analysis seeks to provide significant insights for both academic and practical applications in labour market studies and the adoption of digital technology.

A methodical and thorough examination of relevant worldwide grey literature sources supports this work. The sources have been carefully chosen for their pertinence to the domains of innovation and the impact of digital technologies in business, specifically in their contribution to advancing progress through practical research.

The article is organised across multiple pivotal sections, each focusing on separate facets of labour market changes and digital technologies. After the introduction, the methodology is elaborated in the second chapter. The third chapter segment explores the phenomenon of digital technology and its complicated interconnection with society and the economy. Following that, the research examines the notion of flexibility in working hours, especially utilising a reduced work week, in the fourth section. This is accomplished by analysing diverse experimental models adopted in various countries. The purpose of the analysis in this section is to offer a thorough comprehension of the use and efficacy of these models in improving work-life balance and productivity. The concluding chapter centres on the adaptability of the workplace in response to the increasing demand for inventive work arrangements.

## 2 Methodology

Conducting a grey literature review on work flexibility began with defining the research question or topic, where the aim was to gain a deeper understanding of various aspects and trends in work flexibility. Following this, a search strategy was developed, following the approach of Adams et al. (2017), which involved identifying relevant keywords and phrases related to work flexibility. This strategy guided the search across various databases and sources rich in grey literature, such as government websites, institutional repositories, and conference proceedings.

The next phase involved thoroughly searching for grey literature using pre-determined keywords and sources. This process was meticulously documented, capturing details like search dates, sources searched, and specific terms used, saved in multiple databases (Piotrowski, 2007). After accumulating a range of materials, the screening and selection process commenced. Titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess their relevance, applying specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to refine the selection.

Critical appraisal was an essential step in evaluating the selected grey literature’s quality and relevance. This assessment looked at the credibility of the sources, the methodologies employed, and the validity of the findings presented, particularly concerning work flexibility. Data extraction and synthesis followed, extracting key information and data pertinent to work flexibility from each source. This step involved organising and synthesising the findings that addressed the research question or topic centred on work flexibility.

The final step in this narrative approach involved managing potential biases (Mahood et al., 2014). To counteract this, a broad range of sources was included to provide a balanced and comprehensive view of work flexibility.

The process of a grey literature review is outlined in Figure 1.

The review of grey literature sources revealed three major themes, each pivotal in understanding the current dynamics of the labour market in the context of digitalisation (Figure 2).

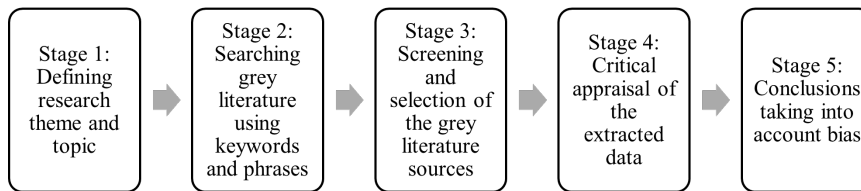
The first theme centres on the impact of digitalisation on the labour market. This encompasses how technological advancements reshape job structures, employment

opportunities, and skill requirements in various industries.

The second theme delves into flexible working arrangements. This aspect explores the evolving nature of work environments and practices, considering how flexibility in location, job roles, and collaborative models are integrated into modern workplaces. This theme is particularly relevant in understanding how businesses and employees adapt to the increasing work-life balance demand and the opportunities presented by remote and hybrid work models.

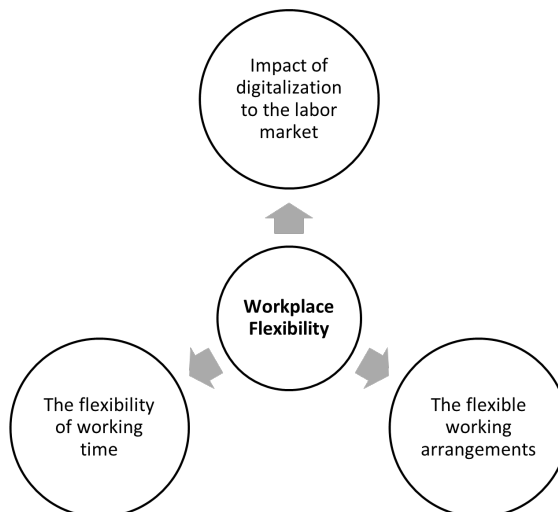
Lastly, the third theme focuses on the flexibility of working time. This involves an examination of how traditional working hours are being redefined. It covers aspects such as part-time work, compressed workweeks, job-sharing, and other innovative time management strategies employed to accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of the workforce.

In the following chapters, each of these themes will be discussed in detail, offering insights into how they individually and collectively influence the contemporary labour market, shape future trends, and address the challenges posed by the rapid pace of digital transformation.



Source: Authors’ work

Figure 1: The process of a grey literature review



Source: Authors’ work

Figure 2: Major themes of workplace flexibility generated by the review of grey literature

### 3 Impact of digitalisation on the labour market

Since the late 1980s, the digital revolution has transformed the economy and society (Mandl, 2020). The first phase was the introduction of the Internet and the broadband network, and the increasing use of digital platforms marked the second phase as business models to offer goods and services. Eurofound mapped all new trends in the inclusion of digital technology in all economic, social and environmental dimensions through the integration of advanced digital technologies (mobile networks of the fifth generation (5G), Internet of things (IoT), cloud computing, artificial intelligence, big data analysis, robotics, etc. (Mandl, 2020).

Digitisation in the economy means meeting the needs of consumers with new innovative solutions, the so-called

smart products. Data and digitised knowledge are becoming a strategic success factor in business (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021). It follows the increased flexibility in work and the re-configuration of digital skills needed for more advanced digital use, thus shaping a new workforce. The traditional economy, with its organisational, production and management systems, overlaps or merges with the development of digitisation. Continuous development in a synergistic process changes the structure and dynamics of business while adopting digital technologies and artificial intelligence marks the entry into a new phase of the digitised economy. The digital transformation process is dynamic and complex, requiring constant adaptation and a systematic approach.

Table 1 shows the dimension of digital development and its active effects on society, the economy and the state.

Table 1: Dimensions of digital development and effects on society, economy and state

Digital development	Society	Economy	State
<b>Risks: Increasing inequality; reduced competitiveness for those lagging in the process; concentration of intellectual capital</b>	New models of communication and interaction; new consumption models	New management models (e.g. SmartCity), new business models, new production models, industrial restructuring	Digital government: active participation of citizens through platforms for comments (public e-debates)
<b>Telecommunications and information technology: digital infrastructure; telecommunication services; software and digital service systems</b>	Broadband internet coverage; high data transfer speeds; easy use of services; accessibility of devices and services		
<b>Digital economy: digital products and services; applications and digital platforms; digital content and media; the sharing economy</b>	Information and knowledge of online products and services; electronic access to public services; threat to privacy and data security; new jobs, development of new digital skills	Innovation and entrepreneurship; access to the market; efficiency in management, marketing and distribution; data management; intellectual capital as a security asset; cyber security and data privacy protection	Digital government; digital innovations in the country; digital tax efficiency; digital citizenship and  citizen participation (e-Citizens); publicly available data and transparency; cyber security and data privacy protection
<b>Digitized economy: smart economy; e-business; e-commerce; industry 4.0; agricultural technique, financial technology, automotive technology</b>	Smart products and services; informed users; new jobs, new digital skills; cyber security and data privacy protection	Industrial reconfiguration (automation and robotics); sophisticated production; digital transformation of production; cyber security and data privacy protection	Digital innovation; management of public services (education, health, justice, security)
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Development and sustainability</b>	<b>Productivity and sustainability</b>	<b>Efficiency and sustainability</b>

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (2021)

Table 2: Overview of 5 different types of flexibilisation in the organisation

Policy type	Policy examples	Connection types	Employee benefits	Employer features
<b>Schedule</b> <b>(Employees can create their schedules on a daily, weekly and monthly level)</b>	Flexible working hours; Independent creation of the schedule	Schedule; Work place; Continuity; Load	More control over the working day, The ability to meet non-working needs during working hours, A greater sense of creating one's own time	High productivity; Orientation for employees; Less absenteeism; Less overtime work
<b>Workplace</b> <b>(employees can work remotely using technology and other types of communication)</b>	Remote work, virtual offices, hybrid forms of work	Schedule; Work-place	Less time for local driving; Less time for intercity or international travel; Closeness to family and friends	Less traffic; Lower overhead costs; Retaining quality employees; Focus on talents
<b>Continuity</b> <b>(Employees can choose how they will work)</b>	Leave (family, maternity, sick leave, military, for education and training)	Schedule; Continuity; Load	Time for parenting, education, and skill development Longer illness recovery, Possible return to work with job sharing and part-time work	Smaller volume of work; Retaining quality employees
<b>Load</b> <b>(employees may choose to work less than full-time for reduced pay)</b>	Job sharing; Honorary work	Schedule; Continuity	Less load; Less burnout; Less conflict; Better balance between work and family	Smaller volume of work; Retaining quality employees
<b>Mode of operation</b> <b>(employees determine the degree to which they work outside the workplace)</b>	Work in the office; Hybrid work, and remote work	Schedule; Work-place; Continuity; Load; Mode of operation	Ability to coordinate and perform work using technology	Higher productivity; Lower costs of office space

Source: Kossek & Michel (2011)

Compared to traditional organisations, modern, flexible organisations usually have a better identity developed through a specific product or service, a strong and clear vision, expertise and expert knowledge (know-how), developed networks and significant intangible assets and create flexible practices.

Table 2 below provides an overview of the flexibility of work in the organisation (Kossek & Michel, 2011). The first type, schedule flexibilisation, allows employees to create schedules, enhancing control over their working day and meeting non-work needs. This leads to high productivity and reduced absenteeism for employers. Workplace flexibility, including remote and hybrid work, reduces commute time and brings employees closer to family,

while employers benefit from lower overhead costs and retaining quality staff.

Continuity flexibilisation offers options like family or sick leave, allowing time for personal needs and gradual work reintegration. Load flexibilisation, through part-time or job-sharing arrangements, reduces burnout and work-family conflicts. Finally, the mode of operation flexibilisation enables employees to work outside the office, using technology to coordinate tasks, resulting in higher productivity and reduced office space costs for employers. Each type of flexibilisation offers unique benefits, promoting a better balance between work demands and personal life for employees and operational efficiencies for employers.



More and more reports and research actively study new forms of work. Among the more significant ones that shape working environments today, we include Eurofound reports such as “New Forms of Employment Update 2020” (Mandl, 2020), which follows the Mandl et al. (2015) and Mandl and Biletta (2018) studies, which both identify nine new forms of employment in Europe, which have emerged due to the need for increased flexibility by both employers and workers. These forms of employment, which include temporary work, part-time work, and self-employment, have transformed the traditional employer-employee relationship and are often characterised by unconventional work patterns and locations. While some of these new forms of employment may benefit employers and employees, there are concerns about their impact on working conditions and the labour market. The European Employment Strategy (EES) is a key governance mechanism for labour markets in the European Union, aimed at ensuring the survival of the European Social Model (Palpant, 2020). Despite widespread job insecurity in Europe, there is little evidence of significant changes in objective job security measures.

Technological forces are driving significant changes in work and the workforce. Digital technologies and advanced communication tools are changing the way of life and business. 90% of the world’s data was created in the past few years, 2.5 exabytes are produced daily, and 140 million e-mails are sent every minute (Davenport & Rosner, 2016). According to Datareportal (2023), in 2023, there are 5.30 billion Internet users in the world. Globally, the number of Internet users is growing at an annual rate of 3.7 percent, but year-on-year growth is even higher in many developing economies. It is noticeable that the number of Internet users has grown continuously over the past few years. The global number of internet users was predicted to increase continuously between 2024 and 2028 by 1.2 billion users. After fifteen consecutive growing years, it is estimated that the number of users will reach 7 billion and, therefore, reach a new peak in 2028 (Statista, 2023). All presented data affect organisations’ ability to explore new business models. The effective implementation of digital strategies introduces significant changes in the structure and dynamics of work and the connection and communication of the organisation’s stakeholders.

The question arises as to who and what can work in transformative digital ways, considering the emerging need for the ability to solve complex problems through creative thinking. According to research, part of the solution in the digital workplace offers a solution to today’s challenges. In a survey of almost half of the surveyed managers regarding remote work experience, more than half (57%) said they believe that remote work will remain in the future, according to a Eurofound study (Burke, 2023).

## 4 Flexible working arrangements

Digitisation of workplaces carries untapped potential for further development of the ways of work and workforce. The use of technology will affect the development of the economy and social growth and changes, i.e. new realities in the labour market (Stockton et al., 2018); organisations will be created that can implement the potential value and innovations that come with new technology by exploiting human capital and setting new standards. Organisations and these new realities focus on development opportunities such as exponential organisations, learning organisations, flexible organisations, and virtual organisations based on new workforce skills; work ethics, social responsibility, and innovations.

The digital workplace can be considered a natural evolution of the workplace. It supports changes in work styles that enable employees to work more flexibly and personalise, more transparently, unify offline and online communication and provide anywhere and anytime access to tools and information. The digital workplace is a progressive and innovative environment chosen by digitally aware individuals, so in the hunt for talent, the “head hunter” can help attract the best (globally). The workplace continues to evolve in line with digitisation, while employee expectations are consequently changing, so organisations that do not embrace full digitisation risk falling behind. This trend will accelerate as the number of satisfied employees who create productive business relationships grows. Adopting business plans makes the digital workplace a measurable business with clear values while reducing risk.

Opportunities in the labor market perceive new realities through how work tasks are performed. Although there is no single definition of flexible working, flexible working is a way of working that suits the needs of employees, e.g. having flexible start and finish times or working from home (CIPD, 2019).

Table 3 presents a comprehensive overview of flexible working arrangements, illustrating the varied nature of contemporary employment options. These include part-time work, where employees work fewer hours than a typical full-time role, and term-time work, allowing for leave during school holidays. Job-sharing, flexible working hours, and compressed working weeks offer alternatives in job structuring. Innovations like work-from-home, mobile work, zero-hour contracts, and on-call working adapt to changing workplace demands. Other forms encompass career breaks, seasonal, temporary, and work-on-demand through digital platforms. Finally, freelance or consulting work represents the pinnacle of flexibility, giving individuals total control over their work engagements.

Table 4 shows the benefits of flexible forms of work for employees and employers (Howington, 2020). It outlines the benefits of flexible work arrangements for both

employees and employers. For employees, such arrangements enhance work-life balance and job satisfaction, as they value autonomy and freedom. This flexibility reduces stress and costs associated with commuting, subsequently improving mental and physical health. Additionally, this autonomy often results in greater productivity and reduced work absences, making attracting and retaining talent easier.

On the employer side, flexible work forms increase employee productivity and engagement. Employees who control their work schedules are more motivated, contributing to reduced labour turnover and a more diverse workforce. Employers also benefit from cost savings on overheads and office expenses, access to a larger talent pool, and business continuity during unexpected events like natural disasters or health crises. Overall, flexible working arrangements present a win-win scenario, enhancing em-

ployee well-being and employer efficiency.

Concerning work changes and the necessity of flexibility, we follow the process of solving the regulation of new flexible forms of work with three main directions: obtaining work status, obtaining work rights and social protection, ensuring fairness and accountability, and increasing transparency (European Commission, 2021). Work flexibility can also be claimed as a right. In the European Union, employees with children up to (at least) 8 years of age have the right to request flexible working conditions. This may include telecommuting, flexible working hours, or reduced working hours, and it has to be considered, and reasons for any refusal have to be considered. Legislative proposals were made to improve the working conditions of persons who provide services, all in order to create dignified, transparent and predictable working conditions.

Table 3: Flexible working arrangements

Arrangement	Main characteristics
<b>Part-time work</b>	Employees work less than full-time.
<b>Term-time work</b>	A contract for performing a specific job is established with the employee. The employee remains on a permanent contract but may take paid/unpaid leave during the school holidays.
<b>Job-sharing</b>	Two (or occasionally more) employees share responsibility for the work.
<b>Flexible working hours</b>	Employees are given the choice of when to start and finish work.
<b>Compressed working hours</b>	Redistribution of work into smaller and longer blocks during the week; examples are weeks of four and a half days and two weeks of nine days
<b>Annual hours of work</b>	The total number of hours to be completed during the year is fixed, but there is flexibility during the year regarding performance.
<b>Work from home</b>	Employees work from home for all or part of their working time.
<b>Mobile work</b>	Employees work all or part of the working week at a location far from the employer's workplace.
<b>Zero-hours contracts</b>	Contracts are without specific working hours, but the work is determined and paid according to the hourly rate.
<b>Nine-day fortnight</b>	It includes individual employees who have one day off every other week. The actual day off can vary if the employee follows an alternating pattern of five days a week followed by four days a week.
<b>A four-and-a-half-day week</b>	It usually involves a normal work week ending earlier on Fridays. The short day does not necessarily have to be Friday, but this is the most obvious and common.
<b>On-call working</b>	Work is accomplished by calling for the performance of work.
<b>Career brakes</b>	Career breaks or sabbaticals are extended periods of leave – usually unpaid – of up to five years or more.
<b>Seasonal work</b>	Seasonal work allows employees to work intensively during a certain time of the year and have free time in the off-season.
<b>Temporary work</b>	Temporary or contract work allows individuals to work for a fixed period.
<b>Work on demand</b>	Includes platforms and apps that connect workers with short-term or sporadic tasks such as ride-sharing, food delivery, and micro-tasking platforms.
<b>Freelance/consulting work</b>	Starting your own or consulting business provides the ultimate flexibility, allowing individuals to choose their clients, projects, hours and working conditions.

Source: CIPD (2019)



Table 4: Benefits of flexible forms of work for employees and employers

For employees	For employers
Improved work-life balance	Increased employee productivity
Reduced stress and costs when travelling to/from work	Cost savings – overhead and office costs
Increased job satisfaction - employees value autonomy and freedom	Reduced labour turnover
Health and well-being - reducing stress and having a better work-life balance can lead to improved mental and physical health	Improved employee engagement - employees who have control over their work classes are often more engaged and motivated
Greater productivity is a consequence of job satisfaction	A diverse workforce
Reduced absences from work	A larger talent pool
Attracting and retaining talent	Business continuity during unforeseen circumstances such as natural disasters or health crises

Source: Howington (2020)

CIPD (2023) indicates the following as the key reasons for implementing the possibility of flexible work: (i) Increase the ability to attract and retain employees (60%); (ii) Work-life balance support (60%); (iii) Employee motivation/productivity support (54%); and (iv) Support for employee mental health and well-being (54%).

The same report (CIPD, 2023) indicates that the following key reasons for not implementing flexible working options are the business priorities of organisations for which flexibility is not a priority because of the challenges faced by organisations (60%) and the challenge of job design, as some jobs in organisations require specific working hours and flexible hours would have perceived as an unfair practice if they are not available to everyone (27%).

Flexible work practices, which empower employees to decide when, where, or how much they work, have been around for some time. Numerous studies revealed a significant prevalence of these practices: a majority offered flexible schedules, around half provided telecommuting options, and a substantial proportion had shortened work weeks, job sharing, and reduced working hours. Today, the popularity of these practices on a global scale is a pressing issue. Thanks to the established advantages of flexible work, organisations now have greater opportunities to balance personal and organisational benefits. However, embracing such flexibility necessitates an acceptance of continual change. Experimenting, encountering failures, learning, revising, improving, and effectively implementing these practices is crucial. Successfully identifying and combining the best policies, design, and activation strategies for flexible practices within organisations is key to their effective utilisation.

Ultimately, a shift like telecommuting is underway, and three different approaches are possible, each with different implications. “Working from home” replicates

office working conditions to the greatest extent possible, with well-defined legal provisions regarding hours, equipment and even space; “objectively based work” does not foresee the implementation of working hours: employees have tasks that they must complete in the ways they see fit and with the equipment they have at hand, similar to freelancers. It was often applied out of necessity during the shutdown. “Mixed work”, also known as “smart work” in some countries, combines working from home and in the office, which means meetings with other colleagues and sharing a desk on agreed days (Global Workplace Analytics, 2020). The driving force behind these possibilities is digital technology, and human resources must complement their resources by developing their skills and knowledge. Characteristics of the new reality of the labour market (Stockton et al., 2018): (i) Emphasise the cooperation between man and machine and contrast them as competition; (ii) Identify the most important value chains in business and invest in the transformation of work; (iii) Employees, especially those of the younger generation, expect companies to play a positive role in shaping society.

## 5 Flexibility of working time

The ability to work remotely has become important when deciding on employment. Hybrid working is no longer nice: more than 70% of candidates now insist that companies have a flexible work policy (International Workplace Group, 2022). Today, organisations are focused on hyper flexibility, part-time commutes, green dividends, suburban revitalisation, virtual collaboration, productivity metrics, workforce dispersion, experience design, reduced overheads, and new organisational paradigms. From an organisational perspective, there are many strategies to or-

ganise different remote elements of work that can be combined (Kossek et al., 2021): people – split (some workers on site, some remotely); time – split (individual work in time of best fit for working, respecting personal and business balance, multiple smaller working periods) or remote first (remote work is the default, on workplace face –to – face on demand).

The flexibility of working hours is developed through the possibility of digitising workplaces. The implications and recommendations for organisations on flexible working hours can be summarised (CIPD, 2023). First, through internal policies, enable employees to recognise flexibility from the first day of employment, wherever possible, that jobs can be performed flexibly, thus attracting candidates looking for flexibility. Second, to raise awareness of different forms of flexible working throughout the organisation. Third, to develop ways to create a stronger connection between employees and the purpose as well as the culture of the organisation while continuously reviewing, adapting and improving flexible work by co-designing developing clear and transparent policies and principles on eligibility for and access to said practices. Fourth, to assess organisational risks related to equality and inclusion of employees in flexible work practices and develop an action plan and guidelines for implementation as well as opportunities for learning and development, as well as rewards and recognition, regardless of where and when people work. Finally, to train managers on managing flexible and hybrid teams effectively and provide support around performance management, remote communications, collaboration and relationship building, and employee development and advancement.

Stockton et al. (2018) introduced a new workplace ecosystem based on flexibility, collaboration and connectivity. Workplaces act as ecosystems that are important to business goals and ultimate success. Workplace ecology, therefore, is when organisation, space and technology are in harmony to support the human endeavour. The main organisational effort is on technology, place, space and talent. The report discusses why flexible working should be implemented. For example, in a four-day working week, two models are dominant. The first model is a compressed work week with a schedule of four (instead of five) working days with 10 hours of working time for 40 working hours per week. Another model is a shortened working week according to the 100-80-100 principle, which is 100% work in 80% working time for 100% salary.

The advantages of a four-day working week are (LQ, 2022): additional days off; a better balance between private and business time; less time is wasted on the way to and from work; a decrease in the level of recorded fears, fatigue or sleep problems; workers are sick less often; increase in employee satisfaction and they are reciprocally ready for some other concessions; and reduction of costs in the case of an increased number of sick days and especially

long sick days in the case of mental illnesses.

The world's most extensive four-day workweek trial, in which 2,900 workers from 61 companies in the U.K. participated from June to December 2022, has released its full findings (Laker (2023). Various four-day-week models were followed, such as Fridays off, staggered, decentralised, and annualised. The trial found that the four-day workweek significantly increased job satisfaction, improved work-life balance, and reduced employee stress. The results also showed improved product quality, customer service, and a significant reduction in absences and sick days. Such a workplace can help risk management to overcome any situation because of its flexible, adaptable approach to the workplace: private workplace in different locations, available immediately for an unlimited number of days per year and 24/7 for working, assuring flexible individual arrangement.

Flexible work is the future. It reduces the ecological footprint, revitalises rural environments (working locally), improves mental health, and improves skills, mainly due to the need to review the previous aspects of work and to put a greater focus on the values of individuals.

## 6 Conclusion

The investigation and analysis of evolving work structures reveal a growing inclination towards non-standard work forms. This trend suggests increasing employee preference for flexible work arrangements, with projections indicating a continuous rise in their numbers. Consequently, the traditional office setting is no longer deemed essential for employment; instead, flexible work environments are emerging as sought-after workplaces.

Digitisation integrates a major impetus for progressive structural change. Access is universal, while capacity development depends on developing digital skills and, thus, the range of use. The digital transformation of workplaces has begun, and those who do not adapt will be significantly left behind. The working status of workers of new forms of arrangement is currently being considered because it is necessary to regulate each form of work in a way that enables unimpeded further development. There are many arguments why more people are opting for flexible forms of work, which is why regulation is needed. All concepts of flexible work enable a better balance between business and private obligations, thereby increasing the employee's well-being. The business of the future is shaped through new business models and flexible workplaces.

In conclusion, this literature review has provided a comprehensive analysis of the evolving dynamics in the labour market, with a particular focus on workplace flexibility. The study has successfully utilised descriptive and compilation methodologies to delve into grey literature, offering unique perspectives on the impact of digitalisation and sustainable digitisation policies on labour mar-

ket trends. The research has highlighted three significant themes: the influence of digitalisation on the labour market, the emergence of flexible working arrangements, and the growing importance of working time flexibility.

The findings underscore that the digital revolution, further propelled by the challenges and changes brought about by the pandemic, fundamentally alters work practices and lifestyles. This transformation is leading to the creation of new forms of work that prioritise optimisation and flexibility, which are essential in today's fast-paced and digitally-driven world. Adopting these new work forms has been shown to enhance productivity and efficiency while simultaneously reducing operational costs.

Moreover, integrating technology in the workplace reshapes job structures and significantly impacts the quality of work and the competencies required from employees. This shift necessitates reevaluating workforce strategies to meet the changing needs and skills demanded in the modern labour market.

Overall, the study illuminates the critical role of digitalisation in shaping future work practices and policies, providing valuable insights for both academic research and practical applications in labour market studies and digital technology implementation. The trends identified in this review offer a roadmap for navigating the challenges and opportunities of the evolving landscape of work flexibility and digitalisation.

One notable limitation of this study is the potential for publication bias within grey literature, as it may not represent a comprehensive view of all existing research and opinions on the subject. Additionally, grey literature sources' inherent diversity and varying quality can challenge standardising and comparing data. While comprehensive in these areas, the focus on digitalisation and workplace flexibility may have inadvertently overlooked other emerging trends in the labour market. Furthermore, the temporal scope of the literature reviewed may not capture the most recent developments, particularly in such a rapidly evolving field.

Future research could expand on this study by incorporating a wider temporal range of grey literature, ensuring the inclusion of the most recent developments in digitalisation and workplace flexibility. There is also an opportunity to explore the varied impacts of these trends across different industries and demographic groups, providing a more nuanced understanding of their effects. Comparative studies across different regions or countries could offer insights into how cultural and economic factors influence the adoption and impact of digitalisation and flexible work arrangements. Additionally, investigating the long-term implications of these trends on career trajectories, employee well-being, and organisational structures would be valuable. Finally, future studies could explore the interplay between digitalisation and other emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and automation, and their collective impact on the future of work.

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