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№ 4 (6) – 2026

АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ГУМАНИТАРНЫХ НАУК

ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

TOSHKENT-2026

BOSH MUHARRIR:

Isanova Feruza Tulqinovna

TAHRIR HAY'ATI:

07.00.00- TARIX FANLARI:

Yuldashev Anvar Ergashevich – tarix fanlari doktori, siyosiy fanlar nomzodi, professor;

Mavlanov Uktam Maxmasabirovich – tarix fanlari doktori, professor;

Xazratkulov Abror – tarix fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Tursunov Ravshan Normuratovich – tarix fanlari doktori;

Xolikulov Axmadjon Boymahammatovich – tarix fanlari doktori;

Gabrielyan Sofya Ivanovna – tarix fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Saidov Sarvar Atabullo o'g'li – katta ilmiy xodim, Imom Termiziy xalqaro ilmiy-tadqiqot markazi, ilmiy tadqiqotlar bo'limi.

08.00.00- IQTISODIYOT FANLARI:

Karlibayeva Raya Xojabayevna – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, professor;

Nasirxodjayeva Dilafruz Sabitxanovna – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, professor;

Ostonokulov Azamat Abdukarimovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, professor;

Arabov Nurali Uralovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, professor;

Xudoyqulov Sadirdin Karimovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Azizov Sherzod O'ktamovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Xojayev Azizxon Saidaloxonovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, dotsent

Xolov Aktam Xatamovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD), dotsent;

Shadiyeva Dildora Xamidovna – iqtisodiyot fanlari bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD), dotsent v.b,;

Shakarov Qulmat Ashirovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari nomzodi, dotsent,;

Jabborova Charos Aminovna - iqtisodiyot fanlari bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD).

09.00.00- FALSAFA FANLARI:

Hakimov Nazar Hakimovich – falsafa fanlari doktori, professor;

Yaxshilikov Jo'raboy – falsafa fanlari doktori, professor;

G'aybullayev Otabek Muhammadiyevich – falsafa fanlari doktori, professor;

Saidova Kamola Uskanbayevna – falsafa fanlari doktori;

Hoshimxonov Mo'min – falsafa fanlari doktori, dotsent;

O'roqova Oysuluv Jamoliddinovna – falsafa fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Nosirxodjayeva Gulnora Abdukaxxarovna – falsafa fanlari nomzodi, dotsent;

Turdiyev Bexruz Sobirovich – falsafa fanlari doktori (DSc), Professor.

10.00.00- FILOLOGIYA FANLARI:

Axmedov Oybek Saporbayevich – filologiya fanlari doktori, professor;

Ko'chimov Shuxrat Norqizilovich – filologiya fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Hasanov Shavkat Ahadovich – filologiya fanlari doktori, professor;

Baxronova Dilrabo Keldiyorovna – filologiya fanlari doktori, professor;

Mirsanov G'aybullo Qulmurodovich – filologiya fanlari doktori, professor;

Salaxutdinova Musharraf Isamutdinovna – filologiya fanlari nomzodi, dotsent;

Kuchkarov Raxman Urmanovich – filologiya fanlari nomzodi, dotsent v/b;

Yunusov Mansur Abdullayevich – filologiya fanlari nomzodi;

Saidov Ulugbek Aripovich – filologiya fanlari nomzodi, dotsent;

Qodirova Muqaddas Tog'ayevna - filologiya fanlari nomzodi, dotsent.

12.00.00- YURIDIK FANLAR:

Axmedshayeva Mavlyuda Axatovna – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor;

Muxitdinova Firyuza Abdurashidovna – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor;

Esanova Zamira Normurotovna – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor, O‘zbekiston Respublikasida xizmat ko‘rsatgan yurist;

Hamroqulov Bahodir Mamasharifovich – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor v.b.,;

Zulfiqorov Sherzod Xurramovich – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor;

Xayitov Xushvaqt Saparbayevich – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor;

Asadov Shavkat G‘aybullayevich – yuridik fanlar doktori, dotsent;

Ergashev Ikrom Abdurasulovich – yuridik fanlari doktori, professor;

Utemuratov Maxmut Ajimuratovich – yuridik fanlar nomzodi, professor;

Saydullayev Shaxzod Alixanovich – yuridik fanlar nomzodi, professor;

Hakimov Komil Baxtiyarovich – yuridik fanlar doktori, dotsent;

Yusupov Sardorbek Baxodirovich – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor;

Amirov Zafar Aktamovich – yuridik fanlar doktori (PhD);

Jo‘rayev Sherzod Yuldashevich – yuridik fanlar nomzodi, dotsent;

Babadjanov Atabek Davronbekovich – yuridik fanlar nomzodi, professor;

Normatov Bekzod Akrom o‘g‘li — yuridik fanlar bo‘yicha falsafa doktori;

Rahmatov Elyor Jumaboyevich — yuridik fanlar nomzodi;

13.00.00- PEDAGOGIKA FANLARI:

Xashimova Dildarxon Urinboyevna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, professor;

Ibragimova Gulnora Xavazmatovna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, professor;

Zakirova Feruza Maxmudovna – pedagogika fanlari doktori;

Kayumova Nasiba Ashurovna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, professor;

Taylanova Shoxida Zayniyevna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Jumaniyozova Muhayyo Tojiyevna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Ibraximov Sanjar Urunbayevich – pedagogika fanlari doktori;

Javliyeva Shaxnoza Baxodirovna – pedagogika fanlari bo‘yicha falsafa doktori (PhD);

Bobomurotova Latofat Elmurodovna — pedagogika fanlari bo‘yicha falsafa doktori (PhD);

Sulaymanova Dildora Nazarovna – pedagogika fanlari bo‘yicha falsafa doktori (PhD).

19.00.00- PSIXOLOGIYA FANLARI:

Karimova Vasila Mamanosirovna – psixologiya fanlari doktori, professor, Nizomiy nomidagi Toshkent davlat pedagogika universiteti;

Hayitov Oybek Eshboyevich – Jismoniy tarbiya va sport bo‘yicha mutaxassislarni qayta tayyorlash va malakasini oshirish instituti, psixologiya fanlari doktori, professor

Umarova Navbahor Shokirovna– psixologiya fanlari doktori, dotsent, Nizomiy nomidagi Toshkent davlat pedagogika universiteti, Amaliy psixologiyasi kafedrasi mudiri;

Atabayeva Nargis Batirovna – psixologiya fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Shamshetova Anjim Karamaddinovna – psixologiya fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Qodirov Obid Safarovich – psixologiya fanlari doktori (PhD).

22.00.00- SOTSIOLOGIYA FANLARI:

Latipova Nodira Muxtarjanovna – sotsiologiya fanlari doktori, professor, O‘zbekiston milliy universiteti kafedra mudiri;

Seitov Azamat Po‘latovich – sotsiologiya fanlari doktori, professor, O‘zbekiston milliy universiteti;

Sodiqova Shohida Marxaboyevna – sotsiologiya fanlari doktori, professor, O‘zbekiston xalqaro islom akademiyasi.

23.00.00- SIYOSIY FANLAR

Nazarov Nasriddin Ataqulovich –siyosiy fanlar doktori, falsafa fanlari doktori, professor, Toshkent arxitektura qurilish instituti;

Bo‘tayev Usmonjon Xayrullayevich –siyosiy fanlar doktori, dotsent, O‘zbekiston milliy universiteti kafedra mudiri.

OAK Ro‘yxati

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08.00.00-IQTISODIYOT FANLARI – ECONOMICAL SCIENCES

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Article / Original Paper

DIGITALIZATION AND EMPLOYABILITY: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH TRENDS (2018–2025)

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Abstract. This study maps the growth of research on digitalization and employability through a bibliometric analysis of 223 journal articles published between 2018 and 2025. Using the bibliometrix R package (R Studio) and Scopus data, we identify key trends, leading contributors, and dominant themes shaping this rapidly expanding field.

Keywords: digitalization, employability, digital skills, workforce transformation, bibliometric analysis, Industry 4.0.

RAQAMLASHTIRISH VA BANDLIK: TADQIQOT TENDENSIYALARINING BIBLIOMETRIK TAHLILI (2018–2025)

Tillabayeva Umida Maxsumovna
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G.V. Plexanov nomidagi Rossiya iqtisodiyot universitetining
Toshkent shahridagi filiali

Talipova Nigora Tulkunovna
iqtisodiyot fanlari nomzodi, professor,
G.V. Plexanov nomidagi Rossiya iqtisodiyot universitetining
Toshkent shahridagi filiali

Annotatsiya. Ushbu tadqiqotda 2018 yildan 2025 yilgacha nashr etilgan 223 ilmiy maqolaning bibliometrik tahlili o‘tkazilgan. Joriy tahlil orqali raqamlashtirish va bandlik sohasidagi ilmiy tadqiqotlarning rivojlanish dinamikasi o‘rganilgan. “Bibliometrix” paketi (R Studio) va Scopus ma’lumotlar bazasidan foydalangan holda, bugungi kunda tez rivojlanayotgan asosiy tendensiyalar, yetakchi mualliflar va dolzarb mavzular aniqlangan.

Kalit so‘zlar: raqamlashtirish, bandlik, raqamli ko‘nikmalar, mehnat bozorini transformatsiya qilish, bibliometrik tahlil, Industriya 4.0.

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Introduction. Over the past decade, the adoption of automation, the development of artificial intelligence, and data-driven management have radically transformed the labor market. This has happened faster than many organizations anticipated. For example, in its 2023 report "The Future of Jobs," the World Economic Forum estimated that within five years, 44% of workers' core skills will become obsolete, while demand for digital and technical skills will grow in virtually all sectors [1]. It is important to note that this issue affects not only workers or employers. Digital competencies have become a direct factor determining success in the labor market [2].

In addition to these factors, the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated this trend. A 2020 global survey by McKinsey revealed that companies have now compressed the digital transformation process—which typically took five to seven years—into a matter of months [3]. Remote work, digital collaboration tools, and automated workflows are no longer just long-term investments; many organizations now rely on them because the market, competition, and the economy demand it. As a result, gaps in digital skills have emerged that were previously manageable. Our surveys show that academic research has responded accordingly: since 2020, the number of publications on digitalization and employment has risen sharply.

Despite this, much of the research remains scattered across fields such as human resource management, economics, education, and organizational behavior. Academic studies typically focus on narrow issues, such as specific types of skills or training programs for a single industry. There is no connection to the broader question of how this field is evolving as a whole.

Therefore, for this study, we employ bibliometric analysis. The bibliometric analysis directly addresses this issue, as it uses quantitative methods to map the literature, track intellectual trends, and identify where knowledge is concentrated and where gaps remain [4]. The contribution of this study lies in the fact that it specifically applies this analysis to the intersection of digitalization and employment as a distinct field of research.

Literature Review. Bibliometric analysis has grown into a standard research method in management and the social sciences because it can do something traditional literature reviews cannot: it treats a body of scholarship as data. Rather than selecting and interpreting individual papers, bibliometric methods measure the statistical patterns across thousands of publications, revealing which authors anchor a field, which journals shape its discourse, and how research themes shift over time [5]. The bibliometrix package for R, developed by Aria and Cuccurullo [6], provides the computational environment used in this study and has become the reference tool for this type of analysis in management research.

As we have observed, the main academic literature on the topic of digitalization and employment has been formed in three directions. The first research line is the discussion of the exact digital skills that employers need. The concept of digital literacy is not simply one skill, but a system which includes not only technical skills or data literacy but also communication skills and problem-solving skills [2]. The second area looks at the response of organizations in the case where these skills have not been acquired. Retraining and upskilling programs are the primary methods of organizational response to digital shortages in the framework of Industry 4.0 [1], but most of these programs are reactive, not planned [7]. A third line of research, that has emerged quite recently, is that of higher education in reducing the disparity between skills of graduates and the requirements of the employers. Research confirms that even in many countries the discrepancy between university programs and labor market requirements is

continuing [2]. They also observe that this imbalance is further aggravated by the fact that technology is evolving at a greater rate than curricula is being transformed [8].

What none of this existing work provides is a view of the field as a whole. The studies cited above address important questions within the digitalization-employment domain, but no bibliometric mapping of the domain itself has been conducted. We do not yet know how rapidly it has grown, which intellectual contributions have anchored it, how geographically concentrated it is, or how its conceptual vocabulary has changed over time. This study addresses that gap directly.

Methodology. For this study, we retrieved data from the Scopus database, which is recognized as one of the most comprehensive sources of peer-reviewed scientific literature. Our search query was as follows: TITLE-ABS-KEY ((“digitalization” OR “digital transformation” OR “digital economy”) AND (“employment” OR “labor force” OR “employee skills” OR “digital skills” OR “human capital”) AND (“human resources” OR “training” OR “reskilling”)). We limited the search to journal articles published in English between 2018 and 2024, yielding an initial dataset of 205 records. After processing and removing duplicates using the R package bibliometrix, the final analytical corpus consisted of 223 documents.

The analysis was conducted in R Studio using the bibliometrix package version 4.x. The methodological procedure consisted of three consecutive stages. First, we conducted a descriptive analysis of performance to assess the general characteristics of the corpus, including annual publication volume, average citation metrics, distribution of source journals, and author productivity. In the second stage, a country-level analysis was conducted to map the geographical distribution of scientific works. In the final stage, co-occurrence analysis of keywords was applied to track the thematic evolution of the field over the entire study period, and the results were visualized using keyword trend graphs.

Results. The four sets of findings below — publication growth, disciplinary positioning, citation concentration, and keyword evolution — collectively reveal a research community that changed its character after 2020, not just its size.

Annual Scientific Production. Before 2020, this intersection barely existed as an organized research domain. The near-absence of publications in 2018 and 2019 indicates that digitalization and workforce readiness were treated as parallel concerns, not an integrated problem. The pandemic broke that separation (Figure 1). What the growth trajectory reveals is not just volume increase — it is a structural break triggered by a single external event that forced organizations to confront digital readiness gaps they could no longer defer [3]. The field has not plateaued since, which suggests its most influential theoretical contributions are still ahead.

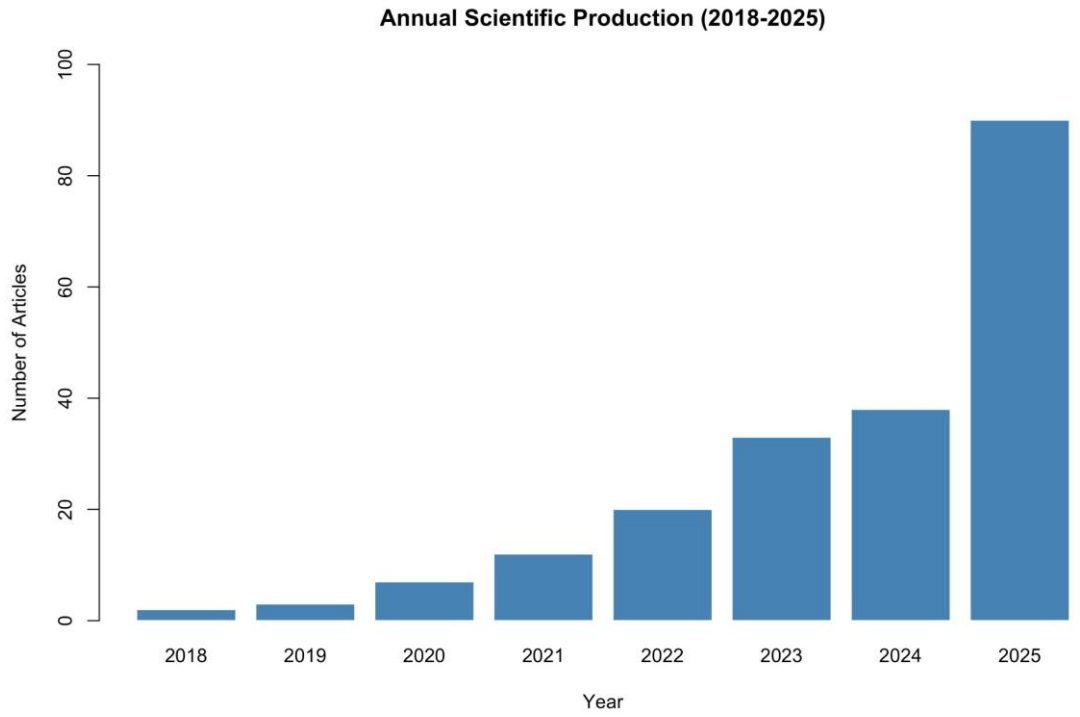

Figure 1. Annual Scientific Production on Digitalization and Employability (2018–2025). Source: Scopus; compiled by the authors using bibliometrix R package.

The list of productive journals in Table 1 shows how this research area is attempting to answer its main question. The journal leading the corpus is a journal that publishes research on sustainability, rather than research published by journals that focus more on human resource management or management. This is not by chance. All scholars practicing in this area appear to have a common view that digital readiness of the workforce will be an ongoing challenge for organizations, and this challenge is related to sustainability rather than being solely an issue related to the training function. This way of framing the issue has influenced the types of solutions recommended in the literature: competency frameworks and curriculum reform are the most frequently recommended solutions, while firm-level reskilling solutions are less frequently recommended solutions [8].

Table 1. Most Productive Journals in the Corpus.

Journal	Articles	% of Corpus
Sustainability (Switzerland)	10	4.5%
Education Sciences	5	2.2%
Higher Education Skills and Work-Based Learning	4	1.8%
Int. Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research	4	1.8%
Journal of Innovation and Knowledge	4	1.8%
Administrative Sciences	3	1.3%
Social Sciences and Humanities Open	3	1.3%
Revista de Ciencias Sociales	3	1.3%

Source: Scopus; compiled by the authors.

Table 2 illustrates how many citations are concentrated within one of the emerging disciplines, demonstrating the importance of not only how the papers ranked in terms of receiving the most citations but also why they received those citations. Researchers did not have any established sources to rely on for their citations prior to 2020 when most of these papers were published, making them de facto citation sources for their fellow researchers; therefore, the purpose for which they are citing these papers has been satisfied through the necessity of finding a foundation to use when citing other researchers' work and providing justifications for future research. The more interesting aspect of identifying which papers published post-2022 have received high citation rates is that they are all moving from simply diagnosing the problem associated with the digital skills gap to developing the operational framework necessary to measure and address that problem [4], indicating that the field has transitioned in terms of what it considers relevant and helpful.

Table 2. Most Cited Documents in the Corpus.

Paper	Total Citations	Cit./Year
Wach, 2023 — Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review	491	122.8
Brunetti et al., 2020 — TQM Journal	408	58.3
Bejaković & Mrnjavac, 2020 — Employee Relations	180	25.7
Chetty et al., 2018 — Economics (e-journal)	171	19.0
Goulart et al., 2022 — Industry and Higher Education	154	30.8
Cetindamar et al., 2024 — IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management	144	48.0

Source: Scopus; compiled by the authors.

Table 3 demonstrates that there is significantly less correspondence between the importance and location of national research communities than would normally be expected from consideration of volume alone. The differences in the volume of publications versus the impact of those publications, measured by citation index, across the largest national research communities demonstrate that research that is focused on universal organizational issues versus research that is focused on national policies or issues will tend to be circulated on an international level, whereas research that is focused on state- or local-issues will tend to be circulated locally [7]. For researchers in this area, position will determine their international reach more so than their productivity.

Table 3. Geographic Distribution of Research Output and Citation Impact.

Country	Articles	Total Citations	Avg. Cit./Article
Spain	11	73	6.6
China	10	—	—
Germany	9	88	9.8
Italy	9	429	47.7
Greece	7	91	13.0
Australia	3	217	72.3
Croatia	1	180	180.0

Source: Scopus; compiled by the authors.

In this instance, the relationship among conceptual evolution processes is not sufficiently characterised in numeric form to allow this map to show a temporal model of knowledge production in research. The dominance of prior years' research from higher education sources has transitioned in the period since 2021 to a view of the same issues from an organizational and management perspective. The most important conceptual development occurred at the latter part of this timeline: Digital Competence, initially identified as a keyword at the outset of the study period, only emerged in definitive form in the year 2023. The term Digital Competence has not just been renamed; but it has also undergone a complete reconceptualising of what "Digital Competence" means. From the eight years of study, early classification of digital readiness was based on discrete skills; while the current classification is based on the competitive competency framework. A significant transition occurred from a structural competitiveness-based framework to a structured competence-based framework based upon a combination of individual skill sets that can be defined, measured, and developed systematically [2]. This transition is arguably the most significant intellectual development to arise from the education system over the course of this study.

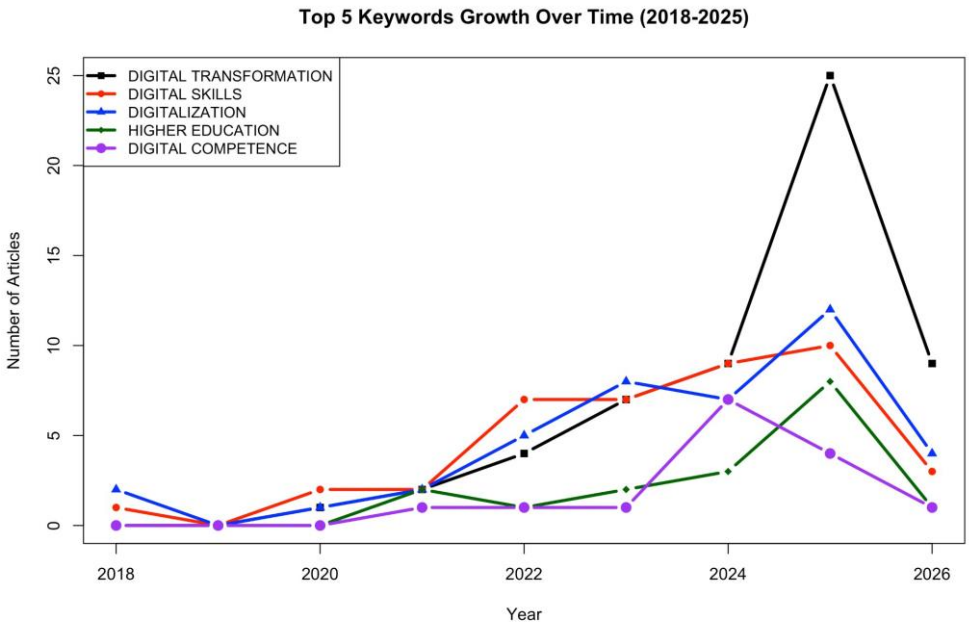

Figure 2. Top 5 Keywords Growth Over Time (2018–2025). Source: Scopus; compiled by the authors using bibliometrix R package.

Discussion. Although a growth rate of 31.61% per year for the volume of academic publications can be considered meaningful, the most important finding from this study relates to how much of the subject area has increased since 2020. Prior to 2020, research on the topics of digitalization and employment existed but was not organized around any central issue. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the issue of organizational structure to emerge. Those organizations that had delayed investing in digital infrastructure and digital training now faced a major consequence of their own inaction, and researchers created an avenue to examine this problem. For example, the most cited article in the collection received 491 citations in total and an average of 122.8 citations per year [3]. It was recognized as a foundational reference when researchers were looking for conceptual foundations to help guide them through their examination of the effects of digitalization on employment and entrepreneurial responses to digital disruption. The fragmentation of citations across various disciplines indicates that the field is still trying to determine which group bears responsibility for addressing the digital readiness issue; HR departments, higher education institutions, government, or individual workers?

The major practical implications of the findings from the keywords evolution analysis are the result of the shift in the terminology used to discuss this subject area by researchers. Specifically, the dominant term has shifted from "digital skills" prior to 2023 to the term "digital competence" beginning in 2023, as evidenced by the data shown in Figure 2. While the terms used in both cases refer to abilities that can be performed or developed by employees in an organization, they are not synonymous. Digital skills represent a distinct, trainable ability that can be objectively measured through creating a performance gap, delivering training to alleviate the gap, and closing the performance gap through performance measures. Conversely, digital competence represents a blend of capabilities that relate to a specific role; it provides an indication of how those capabilities function together within a specific role, and provides an indication of how long these capabilities should remain unchanged, how long it will take to

develop these capabilities, and how digital competencies can be assessed and measured over time.In only a year since their publication, Pham and colleagues have 144 citations (2024), directly illustrate this new framing by arguing that the architectural digital competency must be mapped to job roles and not treated as a universal concept [2]. This shift has immediate ramifications for how organizations establish their workforce development programs. Where training does not connect back to a defined competency profile, there is a low likelihood for long-term results to be achieved. This research has now moved far enough in this new direction that organizations still relying on isolated training solutions derive their assumptions based on out-of-date premises.

The journal outlet distribution data in Table 1 highlight a fundamental issue in how the field is framed. Of the 15 journals identified, the lead journal, Sustainability (Switzerland), has ten articles, while Education Sciences has five articles. Clearly, there are very few HR&M journals represented among the most influential publication outlets. This finding is significant, as the outlet shapes the question that is asked; i.e. the nature of research being published in sustainability and education journals tends to focus on long-term institutional adaptation, curricula, and graduate preparedness. The organizational challenges faced by HR practitioners on a daily basis, like reskilling current employees or embedding the assessment of digital competency into performance management, while at the same time addressing many of the challenges posed by the Active Digital Transformations of an organization, simply do not receive the same attention in this institutional corpus. Explicit documentation of this gap indicates that the majority of the reskilling programs associated with Industry 4.0 are primarily reactive [1], lacking systematic design [7]. Shamim et al.Virtual HRD has been posited to highlight that there was a simultaneous need for organizations to develop their capabilities to digitally deliver workforce skills and to deliver those digitally-available workforce skills at an urgent pace (Brunetti et al., 2021). The academic literature has been slow to come to terms with this organizational shift.

Table 3 shows a concentration of publications by region (i.e., the field has yet to adequately address the issue of geographic concentration). According to Table 3, Spain has the highest number of total published articles (i.e., 11), and Italy is second (i.e., 9); however Italy currently has the most citations (i.e., 429) of any country in this corpus. In addition, the only article from Croatia in the corpus, the sole article from Croatia in the corpus has 180 citations alone [4]. The average citation count for the 3 articles published from Australia is 72.3. However, as noted in Table 3, countries with smaller national research communities tend to produce fewer publications than countries with larger communities; moreover, the articles produced by smaller communities generally have greater international visibility than do those produced by larger communities. A more problematic pattern is that countries in Central Asia, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America are completely absent from the list of contributing countries. It could be argued that these regions have the most acute challenges of workforce digitalization because of ongoing skill gaps and the lack of infrastructure [1]. Research that adopts a European labor market default context in the construction of a theoretical framework may not address the most severe instances of this workforce challenge. Therefore, the most significant limitation of the current literature is that it has produced a geographic blind spot.

As exhibited in Table 2, the concentration of citation totals have led to the development of a methodological warning for the field. When the accumulation of 408 citations by a single article [5] is largely due to its publication time coinciding with the establishment pyre of the field as a whole, and future research therefore builds on the intellectual foundation of Brunetti et al. as shaped by its release date, rather than by its intellectual merit. Van Laar et al.'s (2020) article presents the most systematically constructed framework of digital skill determinants found within the research corpus; however, its own research findings highlight significant social and situational gaps in developing skills [1]. The field will soon need to conduct an audit to determine whether the research published in the single year of crisis still reflects the contemporary collective understanding of the field, but such an audit has not yet been conducted.

Conclusion. The research analyzed a group of 223 publications that have been included in Scopus since 2018, which illustrates how the field of digitalization and employability has evolved in terms of its intellectual structure. Its key finding is that while the field of research on digitalization and employability has expanded significantly since 2020, the most significant finding is that the character of this field has changed. Digital readiness, previously treated as a personal technological competency that someone has or does not have, has now become an organization-wide competency that can be defined, measured and developed structurally. Evidence of this transition can be seen through citation data, keyword development and the nature of the papers listed in the reference section. This also has practical implications for organizations; organizations that have responded to digital transformation by identifying skill gaps and implementing training interventions are utilizing an older model of development than what the research supports today (i.e. a systematic approach of mapping digital competency profiles by role, assessing current capabilities in relation to those profiles, creating development pathways that include formal educational opportunities along with structured employee development through their actual work experience; measuring employee development indirectly through behavioral indicators rather than through completion of assigned courses) [7]. Organizations experiencing limited external support, such as in Central Asia and other emerging economies, need to continue developing internal human resources capabilities, as there is little access to support from external sources [1].

Two limitations of this research should be noted: (1) the analysis only reports on research published in the Scopus database, and (2) the analysis only includes publications in the English language, both of which systematically exclude research that was published in other languages such as Russian, Chinese, Arabic, etc., and some of which is highly relevant to the areas that were identified as needing more data in Central Asia and other emerging economies. In addition, this research was conducted quantitatively; thus, while it produces a picture of the intellectual structure of the field, it does not comment on the substance or quality of the arguments made in the articles being assessed, nor does it distinguish between articles that are cited positively versus articles that are cited negatively. There are three areas for future research based on the findings of this research. Longitudinal studies conducted at the organizational level to track how digital competency frameworks are implemented within organizations will generate empirical data that is currently lacking. Comparative studies across emerging economies and transition economies are needed to understand whether the digital competency frameworks developed in a European context will be applicable or require

significant revisions when used in other countries. Finally, the impact of developing digital competency on various forms of performance (e.g., organizations' innovative performance, employees' well-being and organizations' capacity to adapt and recover) needs to be further researched [4]. These four areas of research need to be addressed in future research.

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