

Call for Papers for a Special Issue of *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*

Situating the Debates on Technologies and Work in the Asia Pacific

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New technologies, such as artificial intelligence, industrial robots, mobile devices, remote-work apps, digital platforms, and algorithmic tools for people management, have significantly impacted the world of work (Litwin et al. 2022; Murray, Rhymer and Sirmon 2021) and transformed how labor is organized into capitalist accumulation processes (Sundararajan 2016). These technologies have restructured modern workplaces, changing not only how jobs are defined (Cappelli and Keller 2013), designed (Jia et al. 2023), and socially constructed (Boons, Stam and Barkema 2015; Josserand and Kaine 2019), but also how workers are controlled in their labor process (Gandini 2019; Kellogg, Valentine and Christin 2020). This development has sparked new debates on the relationships between work and technologies, particularly regarding the role of technologies as means of production (Raisch and Krakowski 2021) and means of labor control (Raham and Valentine 2021). While scholars have extensively researched the impacts of new technologies on work, labor, and human resource management (HRM) (Curchod et al. 2019; Keegan and Meijerink 2023; Kim, Wang and Boon 2021; Nankervis and Cameron 2023; Wilkinson and Haar 2023), along with workers' responses to these changes (Lei 2021; Raham 2021; Maffie 2022), the social embeddedness of these processes has not received much scholarly attention.

In this special issue, we are particularly interested in how the workplace deployment of new technologies is embedded in the unique national and local contexts of the Asia Pacific, and what this social embeddedness means for workers, firms, employment relations, and HRM. The Asia Pacific region provides an important entry point for this inquiry for two reasons. First, it is one of the most dynamic regions in developing and utilizing new technologies. Historically, Asian developmental states have played a significant role in promoting national industrialization through technological advancement. Currently, South Korea, Singapore, China, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia rank among the most innovative economies in the world (WIPO 2022). Moreover, compared to regions such as Europe, Asia Pacific countries have generally shown more openness towards the use of new digital technologies in the workplace, such as digital platforms and algorithm-based data collection. Second, the Asia Pacific region boasts a wide range of diverse institutions and cultures, making it an ideal setting for conducting contextualized and comparative research. Countries in this region can be categorized into different types of political economies, including the Anglo-Saxon model of

liberal market economies (e.g., Australia and New Zealand), coordinated market economies (e.g., Japan), post-colonial countries (e.g., India and Pakistan), and the developmental state model (e.g., China, South Korea, Singapore). These different models suggest a diverse array of possible ways in which the state and other stakeholders may facilitate or challenge the deployment of new technologies, the restructuring of work, and the management of workers. Additionally, workplace culture varies significantly across the Asia Pacific. In East Asian countries, including China, South Korea, and Japan, excessive and unpaid overtime, collectivism, and teamwork practices are prevalent. This is vastly different from the workplace culture in Australia, New Zealand, and many post-colonial countries where individualism and refusal to work overtime are common.

This special issue aims to make two significant contributions by advancing contextualized and comparative research on technologies and work. Firstly, by situating the debates in unique institutional or cultural settings, we aim to bridge the international HR and employment relations (ER) literature with the study of technology in the workplace. This endeavor will enrich scholarly knowledge of the potentially varied outcomes brought about by commonly deployed technologies in different contexts. Secondly, our concerted research efforts will inform multinational corporations as they seek to replicate successful technology models and related work and management practices from one national/regional context to another. It will also provide policy makers with implications on how to best regulate new workplace technologies to balance the interests of different stakeholders in their specific contexts.

We welcome research on technologies and work that are embedded in specific national or regional contexts, or that take a comparative approach. In particular, we encourage empirical studies that address both managerial and institutional issues within the broader context of technology deployment in the workplace. Contributors may address key research areas such as:

- What are the key features of technology-empowered workplaces and management in today's Asia Pacific? How are these features developed, and what technological and social factors contribute to these processes? Additionally, what causes the similarities and variations across national and regional settings?
- How do new technologies become institutionalized in the workplace? Are they introduced through managerial initiatives or restructuring, labor and union-involved collaborations, or state-driven programs? What are the roles of managers, professionals, workers, unions, and other stakeholders in these processes?
- What are the impacts of new technologies on the financial and operational performance of firms? Are these impacts moderated by factors such as how technologies are used, the industry or type of firm, internal organizational structures, or national/regional settings? Moreover, how should firms' HR strategies and functions adapt to these technological changes?
- What are the impacts of new technologies on various employee outcomes, such as wages, benefits, working time, physical and mental health, job security, and privacy? How do these impacts differ among employees with different demographics, occupations, and

- levels of skills, and in various national and regional contexts? Additionally, how do employees respond to or adapt to new technologies? What are the coping strategies of workers who are negatively affected by new technologies, and how effective are they?
- Are there various models of online labor platforms in the Asia Pacific? If so, what are the social, economic, and institutional factors that contribute to the diversity of these models? Additionally, do these platforms implement distinct work and employment arrangements, and what are the implications for workers and their labor processes? Furthermore, how are workers managed or controlled in different models of online labor platforms, and do they respond or resist control in varying ways?
 - Why do individuals in Asia Pacific countries and regions work for online platforms? How do they transition from traditional employment to working as online freelancers or independent contractors? Additionally, are they better or worse off in terms of income, working conditions, work autonomy, work stress, access to social protection, and work-life balance? Moreover, how do they acquire or improve their skills, develop their work and professional identities, and build their careers?
 - What digital HRM systems and practices are being used in the Asia Pacific, and to what extent are they effective in improving financial and operational performance? What factors influence their adoption? Additionally, what challenges do firms and HR professionals face in implementing digital HRM systems or practices? Furthermore, how do digital HRM systems and practices affect workers' attitudes, behavior, and economic and psychological outcomes?
 - How has remote or hybrid work evolved in the Asia Pacific, and is there variation in the extent to which remote work is adopted across countries and regions? If so, what accounts for these differences? Additionally, how is remote work managed across different industries? Moreover, what are the impacts of remote or hybrid work on firms and workers, and what are the factors that influence these impacts?
 - What challenges and opportunities have arisen for worker representation in the Asia Pacific due to new technologies? How do labor unions respond to these challenges and opportunities, and how effective are their responses? Moreover, are there similarities or variations in union responses across different countries and regions, and if so, what factors contribute to these similarities or variations?
 - How do governments in the Asia Pacific respond to new workplace technologies? What innovative strategies, policies, and regulations have been devised, and how do they influence the deployment of new technologies in the workplace? Moreover, what political economy factors shape the policy agendas and regulatory approaches of governments in this regard?
 - How does the deployment of technologies and its impact in today's Asia Pacific compare to the past when Western technologies were transferred and deployed in the region? What has changed or remained the same, and why? Furthermore, what implications or lessons can we learn for the Asia Pacific from studies of technologies and work in other parts of the world?

The above list of questions is not intended to be exhaustive. The guest editors of the special issue encourage authors to contribute papers that address issues consistent with the themes

outlined in this call for papers. Papers can be from different theoretical perspectives, as can be the use of different empirical methodologies (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, case-oriented or mixed). Works submitted must be original studies that contribute to the advancement of existing knowledge and/or debates on the topic.

Submissions for the special issue will open on January 1, 2024 and will close on **January 31, 2024** and authors are advised to follow the submission guidelines of APJHR available [here](#). All papers for the special issue will go through the standard peer review process of APJHR without guarantee of final acceptance.

Submissions can be lodged at <https://wiley.atyponrex.com/journal/APHR>.

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