



Digital Platform Continuance During the Great Resignation: Evidence from Knowledge Workers in Europe and Africa

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Abstract

As countries emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic, management teams faced the challenges of supporting their employees to return to the traditional office work environment, adopting hybrid work modes to ensure business continuity, and creating work conditions conducive to personal well-being. Despite the critical role of digital platforms during the pandemic, there is limited understanding of the role of digital platform continuance to retain employees during the Great Resignation phenomenon. To address this gap, this study focuses on organisational support as there is growing recognition of its importance in digital platform continuance. Using partial least square algorithms, we used the organisational support theory and information systems (IS) continuance literature to derive a research model tested on data collected from 447 knowledge workers across central Europe and Africa. The results show that management-by-objective (MBO) and support from direct managers are essential determinants of knowledge workers' post-crisis digital platform continuance intentions. The perceived usefulness of digital platforms mediates the effect of direct manager support on digital platform continuance. We discuss how the results could extend organisational level IS continuance research and help organisations develop strategies to retain employees in this post-crisis work-related phenomenon.

Keywords Organisational Support · Post-crisis · Information system continuance · Digital platform · Remote work

1 Introduction

The recent Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the value of digital platforms to facilitate the rapid transition from traditional office-based work to remote work settings (Kark et al., 2021; Rimol, 2020). Post-pandemic, however, tensions exist about remote work practices. On the one hand, employees are being encouraged to adopt hybrid work modes to ensure business continuity (Bienkowska et al., 2022; Kark et al., 2021), and they learn to respond more efficiently (Bapuji et al., 2020) to the expected seasonality of epidemics (Marani et al., 2021) and other global events (e.g., natural or human-made disasters) that may trigger abrupt remote

work practices (Waizenegger et al., 2020). On the other hand, management teams are concerned about remote work settings due to a fear of losing control over employees' work performance and outcomes, which may affect overall business productivity (Lal et al., 2023; Venumuddala & Kamath, 2022). Managers often tend to micromanage employees by implementing too many control features on digital platforms for remote work despite evidence that knowledge workers are more focused and productive in remote work settings (Birkinshaw et al., 2020; Krishnamoorthy, 2020). In the context of this study, remote work is defined as "work carried out in a location where, remote from central offices or production facilities, the worker has no personal contact with co-workers there, but can communicate with them using new technology" (Di Martino & Wirth, 1990, p. 540). These tensions have led to anecdotal evidence that many knowledge workers would rather resign than abandon the possibility of working remotely, at least part-time (Economist, 2021; Nick, 2022; Taylor, 2022). They have also propagated the 'great resignation' (Idowu & Elbanna, 2022; Tung, 2022), a global phenomenon that refers to the growing trend of employees quitting their jobs in favour for

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maintaining flexibility in terms of work location and conditions to achieve personal well-being (Bove, 2022; Fuller & Kerr, 2022).

At the same time, digital platforms are changing phenomena throughout the information systems (IS) research space (de Reuver et al., 2018), from user interactions with organisations (Spagnoletti et al., 2015) to inter-organisational relations of IS development teams (Eaton et al., 2015; Ghazawneh & Henfridsson, 2013) to architectures of IS artefacts (Tiwana & Konsynski, 2010). While these changes add to the challenges of studying digital platforms, which are distributed in nature (Henfridsson et al., 2014), they provide opportunities to advance knowledge since they are in the middle of the maturity curve (de Reuver et al., 2018).

Digital platform continuance has been studied from various perspectives that focused on different aspects of this phenomenon, such as privacy (Albashrawi & Motiwalla, 2019; Shih & Sung, 2021), virtual working (Cho & Park, 2021), crowd working (Idowu & Elbanna, 2022), and in different contexts, such as software development teams (Baumann et al., 2022), and the information technology industry (Venumuddala & Kamath, 2022). Studies have also focused on a specific technology such as peer-to-peer digital platforms (Tamilmani et al., 2022), social networking sites (Cao et al., 2020; Chin et al., 2020; Dhar & Bose, 2022; Idemudia et al., 2018), learning management systems (Dang et al., 2017), mobile applications (Franque et al., 2022; Tam et al., 2020; Zamani et al., 2021), and smartphones and text messaging (Ghahramani & Wang, 2020; Gong et al., 2020). Despite the interest in digital platform continuance, researchers tend to investigate organisational support and technological factors independently, even though organisational support implies providing appropriate technological infrastructure to ensure digital platform continuance (Cui et al., 2021; Ng et al., 2022; Satiman & Zulkifli, 2022). Hence, a focus on organisational support is pertinent to this study as there is growing recognition of its importance in digital platform continuance.

At this point, we see another significant challenge for digital platform continuance and its effects on employees. Previous studies (e.g., Cui et al., 2021; Tamilmani et al., 2022) have relied on technology adoption theories and models (e.g., technology acceptance model (TAM), expectation confirmation model (ECM) of IS continuance) to investigate individual-level factors affecting such digital platform continuance. For example, in the context of education, studies reveal that teachers' intentions toward online teaching platform continuance depend on subjective norms, information literacy rates, perceived usefulness, and satisfaction with the platform and that school, technical, and support strongly affect the intention of teachers to continue using virtual learning platforms (e.g., Cho & Park, 2021; Cui et al., 2021;

Satiman & Zulkifli, 2022). While facilitating conditions and perceived risks do not affect continuance intentions (Cui et al., 2021), facilitating conditions and perceived ease of use strongly affect teachers' intention to continue using digital platforms (Sharma & Saini, 2022). In other contexts, satisfaction, social influence, service quality, relative advantage, technological compatibility, and technological infrastructure also affect employee intentions to continue using digital platforms for remote work because it increases their perceptions of the platform's value (Ebarido et al., 2021; Kim, 2022; Satiman & Zulkifli, 2022). Yet, employees must also perceive behavioural control and flexibility when using these platforms to ensure successful remote work (Ng et al., 2022).

Given this background, this study investigates the effect of organisational support through its practices on digital platform continuance. This research objective can be formulated into the following contextual research question:

How can organisations encourage digital platform continuance for post-pandemic remote work without losing control over employee performance or jeopardising their well-being?

This research question was analysed through the theoretical lens of organisational support theory (OST). OST establishes that employees are more committed to organisations from which they perceive support for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; 1990). Since the use of digital platforms for remote work has been associated with employee well-being since the pandemic (Bove, 2022; Fuller & Kerr, 2022), this paper argues that employees will feel supported in their effort towards well-being if their organisations create an atmosphere favourable for digital platform continuance for post-pandemic remote work. In doing so, we extend the theoretical limits of OST to this new societal phenomenon called the Great Resignation by providing insights that can enable organisations to be better prepared for future pandemics and resulting societal changes that may affect digital platform continuance. A major contributing factor of this study is that it separates organisational support into management support, direct manager/supervisor support, and management-by-objective (MBO) (or self-support).

Based on data collected from 447 knowledge workers in Europe and Africa and analysed using the structural equation modelling approach (SEM), we show that the effects of support from management teams in general and direct managers in particular on the perceived ease of use, usefulness, and continuance of digital platforms post-crises varies with context. However, MBO has a direct positive effect on digital platform continuance in both contexts. It implies that beyond the support knowledge workers perceive from organizational management teams and their direct managers, making them feel supported by giving them clear goals

to achieve using the systems in all autonomy and flexibility positively affects their digital platform continuance.

These findings advance knowledge on the contributions of post-pandemic work patterns by providing empirical evidence of the role of organisational support strategies on post-crisis IS continuance in organisations. Specifically, the results highlight that contrary to previous literature, management support should not be generalized because support from an organization's management team and that from the direct managers of knowledge workers do not have the same effect on users' perceived usefulness and perceived ease of IS use, and thus should be measured distinctively and contextually. Furthermore, this is the first study to propose and provide evidence that MBO is an organization support strategy that could enhance users' digital platform continuance intention since it enhances employee autonomy and flexibility with the work system.

The paper is organised as follows. First, a synthesis of OST and digital platforms as the theoretical lens of this study is provided. Next, the proposed research model and hypotheses are presented. Then, the results are presented, followed by a discussion and implications. The paper ends with a conclusion.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Organisational Support Theory

Organisational support theory (OST) is a theory with a solid social exchange dimension based on a mutual commitment between an employer (organisation) and an employee. Proposed by Eisenberger et al. (1986), OST posits that the more an employee perceives support from their organisation, the more they develop an attachment to the organisation. However, the extent to which the perceived organisational support affects the employee's work effort depends on the employee's personal exchange ideologies. Using OST as a lens enables researchers to gain insight into how: (i) *employees form global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being*; (ii) *perceived organisational support reduces absenteeism*; and (iii) *the relation between perceived organisational support and absenteeism is greater for employees with a strong exchange ideology than those with a weak exchange ideology* (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p.500).

Since its development, this theory has proven relevant in explaining employee behaviours suspected to be motivated by perceived organisational commitment towards their well-being. Thus, OST has led researchers to discover that perceived organisational support is a critical determinant

of employee desire to quit an organisation, organisational commitment, job-related affect, job involvement, turnover intentions, stress, withdrawal behaviour, and job performance (Benlian, 2020; Ertürk & Vurgun, 2015; Krishnan & Sheela, 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017). On these grounds, we argue that OST is relevant to addressing this study's research problem because it addresses the core issue of organisational support for employee well-being that drives the ongoing great resignation trend among knowledge workers.

Perceived organisational support refers to the extent to which employees believe their organisation values and cares about their well-being at work (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Following the theory's assumptions, we argue that perceiving organisational support during the great Resignation depends on the knowledge worker's perceptions regarding the organisation's intention to favour (or not) digital platform continuance for remote work. Supporting this practice would signify that the organisation cares about the employees' work contributions and well-being. Thus, organisational support for digital platform continuance for remote work should be improved so that employees would positively perceive the organisation's efforts. Following the theory's principle of reciprocity, perceived organisational support initiates a social exchange process that will make employees feel obliged to remain with their organisation and increase their efforts to help it achieve its goals. Thus, employees with high perceived organisational support are expected to make greater job efforts, resulting in enhanced overall job performance, commitment, self-enhancement, and reluctance to quit (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

As we adopt a technology perspective to address and explore the great resignation phenomenon, we use digital platform continuance as a proxy for remote work continuance and, hence, a mechanism for organisations to retain their most valued employees. Table 1 maps the relationship between perceived organisational support and IS acceptance by analysing the extant IS literature to position OST with respect to IS acceptance (i.e., intention to use, actual use, and continuance).

The value of Table 1 is that it establishes a clear relationship between organisational support, perceived usefulness, and ease of use and confirms the importance of organisational support in predicting IS intentions to use, actual use, and continuance intentions. The studies evolve in their interest by initially investigating the effects of organisational support on system usage (Igbaria et al., 1995, 1996; Kim et al., 2007). Research interest has since drifted toward intentions to use (Lee et al., 2010; Magni & Pennarola, 2008; Scott & Walczak, 2009). As the effect of organisational support on continuance intention has received limited attention

Table 1 Mapping organisational support constructs to relevant technology acceptance constructs

| Previous research | Organisational support variable | Technology acceptance variable | Relevant outcome variable |
|---------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|
| lgbaria et al., 1995 | Organisational support (management support; end-user computing support) | Perceived ease of use Perceived usefulness | System usage |
| Kim et al., 2007 | Organisational support | Perceived ease of use Perceived usefulness Perceived complexity | |
| Magni & Pennarola, 2008 | Organisational support | Perceived ease of use Perceived usefulness | Intention to use |
| Scott & Walczak, 2009 | Organisational support | Computer self-efficacy | |
| Lee et al., 2010 | Organisational support (training & education; work environment; communication support) | Perceived ease of use Perceived usefulness | |
| Lee et al., 2013 | Organisational support | Perceived ease of use Perceived usefulness | |
| Abdul Rahman et al., 2020 | Organisational support (training & education; work environment; communication support) | User satisfaction Net benefits | Con- tinuance intention |

from the research community, it is theoretically underdeveloped (Abdul Rahman et al., 2020).

However, the extant literature mainly measures organisational support as a single construct, and no study distinguishes the levels of organisational support involved but rather on the types. This approach to assessing organisational support's effect only partially fosters our research because we attempt to provide evidence to support those different levels of organisational support affect knowledge workers differently. Therefore, in this study, we propose to measure organisational support as three distinct variables, management support, direct manager/supervisor support, and management by objective, and show how they can help extend research on post-crisis IS continuance. Management is used as a collective word describing the managers of an organization. Meanwhile, direct manager/supervisor refers to the direct superior of an employee, that is, the manager to whom they report their daily operations.

2.2 Organizational Support for Digital Platforms

Although platform concepts have been extensively studied from a non-digital perspective outside of the IS discipline, the prevalence of digital platforms across many sectors and industries offers 'scope and diversity of scientific discourse' (de Reuver et al., 2018, p. 2). Digital platforms provide opportunities for business model innovation, new strategies, and a mechanism to drive economic growth in many sectors and industries (Asadullah et al., 2018; Bonina et al., 2021). The transformative power of digital platforms contributed to its market value size value of almost \$8 billion USD in 2019 to grow to a predicted \$13.9 billion USD in 2024 (Markets & Markets, 2023) and to be worth over \$30 billion USD by 2030 (Bloomberg, 2023).

Digital platforms have been defined based on two contrasting technical (e.g., software development & production) and non-technical (e.g., B2B & B2C transactions) viewpoints (Asadullah et al., 2018). For example, a technical view defines a digital platform as "a building block that provides an essential function to a technological system and serves as a foundation upon which complementary products, technologies, or services can be developed" (Spagnoletti et al., 2015, p. 364). While a non-technical view defines it as a "two-sided network...that facilitate interactions between distinct but interdependent groups of users, such as buyers and suppliers" (Koh & Fichman, 2014, p. 977). Digital platforms can be categorised as 'collaborative' (e.g., social norms and flexible rules) and 'competitive' (e.g., external contributors develop and create competing goods or services) platforms (Asadullah et al., 2018; Boudreau and Lakhani, 2009). Digital platforms can also be categorised based on their 'open' or 'closed' governance mode (Boudreau, 2010).

The digital platforms reported in this study are listed in order of popularity in Table 2 below. Understandably, the choice of platform would also reflect important differences in pricing and organisational and national culture in Africa and Europe. A number of these platforms offered a free basic plan of their platform during the pandemic (e.g., Microsoft Teams), which may have appealed to individuals and organisations that had limited resources due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions and could not purchase the premium version.

Practitioners can support that the extent to which employees perceive organisational support for the use of digital platforms affects their work effort. Indeed, this support can be perceived from the general management team of the organization and from the direct line managers or superiors of

Table 2 Categorisation of platforms

| Platform | Category | Governance mode | Key Features |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Zoom | Collaborative | Open | Video Conferencing, Screen Sharing, Chat and Messaging, Virtual Backgrounds, Recording and Playback, Webinars and Web Conferencing, Breakout Rooms, Participant Controls, Polling and Q&A, Calendar Integrations, Mobile Accessibility, Whiteboarding, Remote Control, Recording Transcripts. |
| Company intranet | Collaborative | Closed | Content Management, User Authentication and Authorization, User Profiles and Directories, Search Functionality, Communication Tools, Collaboration Spaces, Document Management, Task and Project Management, Calendar and Events, Integration with Business Systems, Mobile Accessibility, Learning Management, Feedback and Surveys, Customization and Personalization, Analytics and Reporting. |
| Microsoft Teams | Collaborative | Closed | Chat and Messaging, Channel-based Communication, Video Conferencing and Meetings, Calendar Integration, File Sharing and Collaboration, Whiteboard, Live Events, Task Management, Bots and Automation, Apps and Integrations, Security and Compliance, Search and Discovery. |
| Microsoft Skype | Collaborative | Closed | Video and Audio Calls, Instant Messaging, Group Video Calls, Voicemail, Skype for Business Integration, Skype Number, Skype Translator, Skype for Web, File Sharing and Collaboration, Integration with Microsoft Services, Skype Manager. |
| Blackboard | Collaborative | Closed | Content Management, Discussion Boards, Assessments and Quizzes, Assignment Submission, Gradebook, Announcements, Calendar, Collaboration Tools, Mobile App, Integration with Third-Party Tools, Attendance Tracking, Accessibility Features, |
| Canvas | Collaborative | Open | Content Management, Discussion Boards, Assessments and Quizzes, Assignment Submission, Gradebook, Calendar, Collaboration Tools, Mobile App, Integration with Third-Party Tools, Peer Review Assignments, Attendance Tracking, Accessibility Features. |
| Slack | Collaborative | Closed | Direct Messaging, File Sharing, Search and Archives, Integrations, Notifications and Mentions, Message Formatting and Code Snippets, Emoji Reactions and Emoticons, Threads, Bot Integrations, Status Updates, Reminders, Channel Analytics. |
| Trello | Collaborative | Closed | Boards, Lists, Cards, Card Details, Labels, Checklists, Attachments, Due Dates, Comments and Activity Log, Collaboration and Sharing, Search and Filter, Power-Ups, Mobile App, Custom Fields, Butler Automation. |
| Google Meet | Collaborative | Closed | Video Conferencing, Real-time Captions, Live Subtitles, Recording and Playback, Polls and Q&A, Breakout Rooms, Calendar Integration, Dial-in Access, Security and Privacy Features, Chat and Messaging, Participant Controls, Low Light Mode. |
| Job-specific software | Collaborative/competitive | Open/Closed | Specialized Functionality, Industry-Specific Templates, Data Management, Integration with Industry Tools, Reporting and Analytics, Workflow Automation, Customization and Flexibility, Document Management, Inventory Management, Task and Project Management, Remote Access and Mobility, Training and Support. |

employees. An example of support perceived from an organization's management team is the use of digital platforms for its networking features, to federate leaders of physically challenged employees in the workplace to share best practice advice that will drive cultural change on the recruitment and career progression of physically challenged talents in the workplace (Godwin, 2015). Organizations can provide support to their employees by providing them access to digital platforms where they can acquire personalized financial wellness advice to improve their financial wellbeing (Mustafa, 2017). Since the Covid-19 pandemic, employees perceive organizational support if they felt the organization had a positive culture towards remote work, demonstrated through support for the use of digital platforms for remote work like online meeting platforms, social media, and document management platforms. Organizations that demonstrated such support kept their employees happier

and motivated (Root, 2021). For example, in the finance industry, financial advisors find it difficult to provide advice to their clients who need to make timely financial decisions if they cannot be reached easily. Thus, advisors perceive organizational support when management teams support their web presence by encouraging the use of digital platforms to support access to online financial advisory services such as using online videos and social media (Manganaro, 2015; Ni, 2017). Such support helps increase their remote work flexibility, which tends to increase their retention and role management efficacy positively (Corporate Adviser, 2022). However, this practice has raised regulatory issues around the suitability of financial advice and guidance provided through digital platforms. Thus, employees perceived organizational support when management teams invested in regulated digital platforms with advanced planning tools, practice management systems, and electronic resources to

help advisers improve their online service offerings (Waller, 2018). In the financial market context, most firms do not provide their brokers with sufficient digital platform training even though every dollar spent on training them on the use of such platforms increase their performance by about 50%. Thus, brokers perceive organizational support when management teams invest in face-to-face training on digital platforms, especially those that can help them build strong relationships with clients, improve sector diversification, capitalization, and product types (Mandell, 2002; Shilling, 2016).

In the automotive industry, increased investments in tire-buying digital platforms enabled employees to continue working on products and interacting with customers. This interactive feature reduced depression among employees, fear of job loss, and hysteria, while enable employees to acquire significant productivity gains (Detore, 2021). In the context of digital TV platforms, for example, employees struggle significantly with the protection of their digital content creations as their copyrights are often violated (Dudley, 2005). In such contexts, employees have perceived organizational support from management teams when these teams prioritize the use of digital platforms and take measures to ensure employees' copyrights are protected and are duly compensated for their content. This support encourages the organizations to create innovative digital contents and more confident in their organizations' effort to manage their digital content rights effectively (Dudley, 2005).

In the technology industry, employees are often seeking change in job profiles as they acquire new skills and competencies. Organizations show support towards such employees via human resource management platforms that facilitate this process. Employees perceive such organizational support positively with regards to their career growth, learning, and networks (Dasgupta, 2016). Employees in the industry are also increasingly faced with challenges regarding the impact of their decisions on the environment. Thus, they feel supported by their management teams invest in digital carbon emission management platforms that can help them to measure, analyse, and manage their carbon emissions at the product and corporate levels (China Economic Review, 2022).

In healthcare, employees perceive organizational support when organizations support the use of digital platforms for their analytics features to deliver the right insight to the right person at the right time in the right context due to the significant gains in productivity for health professionals (Collett, 2019). In the food industry, managers usually need to build capabilities rapidly to adapt to the changing job market and demands. Such managers feel supported and valued for their work by organizations that provide them with digital platforms that support a learning-on-the-go culture, self-service

tools, automation services, and rights license management (Fletcher, 2017; Selwood, 2018). Such support results in increased employee engagement and reduced attrition (Selwood, 2018; Spielmann, 2022).

Meanwhile, direct managers have a stronger effect on employees than the general management team of the organization and thus a great impact on employee engagement. Although many assume that employees only perceive organizational support when it comes from the organization's general management team (e.g., human resources or the C-level managers), over 70% of employees highlight that their direct managers are incredibly critical in inspiring, uplifting, and leading employee engagement (Moore, 2016). It is because most knowledge workers interact with their direct managers more frequently than with the general management team and thus are more likely than other organizational leaders to understand employee engagement levels and what needs to be done to make them a happy, enthusiastic, and profitable workforce (Moore, 2016). Talent development platforms can help direct managers to better implement employee engagement tactics, which would increase the likely hood of employee happiness, retention, and growth potential (Moore, 2016). Meanwhile, direct managers can show employees their support for the use of digital platforms, especially after hiring new employees, by micromanaging their use of such platforms; employees feel supported because it helps them familiarize with the systems faster and helps build their morale (Carolan & Visser, 2018). Direct managers need to invest significant communication and education efforts for employees to feel confident in their direct manager's support for the use of digital platforms needed for their daily operations else they may discontinue its use even if the organization's management team encourages its use, to avoid conflicts with their direct managers (Mustafa, 2017).

Table 3 summarizes examples of organizational support practices that promote digital platform continuance by knowledge workers highlighted above. These findings from practice suggest that indeed, organizational support practices for digital platforms affect knowledge workers differently, depending on if it comes from the management team or their direct managers. Thus, this study hypothesises and tests relationships between these management entities and digital platform continuance to build theory regarding the relationship.

3 Research Model and Hypotheses

Based on the expectation-confirmation model (ECM) of IS continuance (Bhattacherjee, 2001), IS continuance intention refers to users' intention to continue using an IS. The

Table 3 Examples of organizational support practices that promote digital platform continuance by knowledge workers

| Management level | Industry | Type of digital platform | Digital platform feature / component | Organizational support feature or component | Value for digital platform continuance | Citation source |
|--------------------|------------------------|--|--|---|--|-------------------|
| General management | Finance (insurance) | GuideVine, a digital platform which features a website for investors who are looking for a financial adviser online. | Customer relationship management | Provide web presence support | Promotes use of videos and social media to give advice to clients | (Manganaro, 2015) |
| General management | Human resources | online platform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking • Talent management | Support for physically challenged employees | Share best practices that will drive cultural change on the physical challenges in the organization. | (Godwin, 2015) |
| General management | Finance | Investment advisory platform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning management. • Practice management. • Electronic resource management | Ensure regulatory conformity to ensure digital platform continuance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves quality of propositions by financial advisers, leading to reduced cost and reduced work burden | (Waller, 2018) |
| Direct management | NA | Digital platforms | NA | Implement strong communication and education effort | Improves delivery of the end-to-end customer experience | (Mustafa, 2017) |
| General management | NA | Financial literacy platform | Learning management | Provide access to platform | Increases financial wellness | (Mustafa, 2017) |
| Teach leaders | Finance | Portfolio planning platform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning management • Customer data management • Practice management | Provide face to face training to brokers | Leads to relevant information on securities data analysis and client-centric relationship building; reduces preparation time for client visits | (Mandell, 2002) |
| General management | NA | Online meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom, social media, cloud-based platforms, document management systems) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer relationship management • Electronic document management | Develop a positive culture towards remote work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps staff happy and motivated. • Makes meeting with clients much more convenient. • Facilitates online appointment scheduling and payments | (Root, 2021) |
| General management | Finance (mutual funds) | Sales learning platform | Leaning management | Encourage firm-wide adoption mobile-video just-in-time sales learning platform | Increases productivity of sales, marketing, and investment teams due to ability to exchange ideas and share best practices | (Shilling, 2016) |
| General management | Automobile (tires) | tire-buying platform | E-commerce functionalities | Increase investment in digital platforms during crises | Reduces depression, fear of losing job, and hysteria, while increasing productivity | (Detore, 2021) |
| General management | Technology consulting) | Internal HR digital platform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent management • Learning management • Networking functionalities | Invest in talent management platforms | Facilitates employee change in job profile within the firm, thus enhancing their perceived organization support for career growth, learning and networks | (Dasgupta, 2016) |
| General management | Health | Analytics platform | Analytics features | Humanize digital platforms for the people who are receiving the information and acting on it to improve the lives of patients | Increases employee productivity and overall firm performance | (Collett, 2019) |

Table 3 (continued)

| Management level | Industry | Type of digital platform | Digital platform feature / component | Organizational support feature or component | Value for digital platform continuance | Citation source |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| General management | Finance (wealth management) | Remote work platforms | Practice management | Encourage the use of digital platforms for remote work | Increases employee work flexibility, leading to increased employee retention | (Corporate Adviser, 2022) |
| General management | Food industry | Digital platform for training managers | Learning management (study and self-assessment capabilities) | Create a learning-on-the-go culture using digital platforms | Increases employee engagement and reduce attrition | (Selwood, 2018) |
| General management | Finance | Robo advisor platforms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice management Customer management | Encourage remote work culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better customer management Flexible work by employees | (Ni, 2017) |
| General management | Food export | MS Dynamics xRM online platform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-service tools Process automation Plant Variety Rights Licence management Analytics capabilities | Invest in platform requested by team and promote an innovation culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves supplier relationship management. Increases capabilities for B2B interaction. Improved analytical capabilities. | (Fletcher, 2017) |
| General management | Technology | Carbon emission management platform | AI-powered measurement and analysis of carbon emissions at a corporate and product level | Invest in climate action platforms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhances sustainable decision making. Improves carbon emission management | (China Economic Review.com, 2022) |
| Direct manager | NA | Talent development platforms | Talent management | Implement digital platforms to manage employee engagement tactics. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases likelihood to retain employees. Improves responsiveness to employee needs. | (Moore, 2016) |
| General management | Food (bakery) | Bakery management platform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaching and supervision Progress tracking Communication management | Digitize management system to empower managers and improve their practices: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases engagement. Increases accountability. | (Spielmann, 2022) |

theory argues that this decision follows and is influenced by an initial use decision and experience that could lead to discontinuance. This is because IS continuance decisions are often rationally bound and non-trivial since they usually impose financial or non-financial costs on IS users. This rationale justifying the effect of initial IS use on IS continuance intentions has been validated several times in several contexts, such as mobile services (Shang & Wu, 2017), software development (Ahmad et al., 2022), and crowdsourcing (Ayaburi et al., 2020). Following this logic, we define digital platform continuance as an employee's intention to continue using digital platforms for remote work in their organisation. We argue that the decision of knowledge workers to continue using digital platforms to practice post-crisis remote work for their current employers would depend on their experience during the crisis. This decision is not trivial for knowledge workers because it will determine their flexibility regarding their work locations, hence their work-life balance and well-being. Therefore, rational knowledge workers are expected to be more likely to continue using digital platforms to work for their organisations

remotely if they used these platforms during the crisis and had a positive experience, as opposed to those who did not use such platforms or had a negative experience with them. Thus, we pose the following hypothesis:

H1 A knowledge worker's digital platform usage experience during a crisis positively affects continuance intentions post-crisis.

Perceived usefulness is a technology acceptance construct that describes the extent to which a user believes that using a particular IS would improve their job performance (Davis, 1989). The rationale for this construct is that employees seek valuable ways of improving their job performances, which are often attributed to benefits from their organisations, such as raises, bonuses, and promotions (Davis, 1989). Therefore, rational employees are more likely to continue using an IS if they perceive it to help enhance their job performance as opposed to one that doesn't affect or diminish their performance. This theory formed a basis for the ECM (Bhattacharjee, 2001) and has been validated

in several contexts, including the continuance of strategic information systems (Rezvani et al., 2017) and mobile banking systems (Foroughi et al., 2019). Following this logic, we argue that knowledge workers who found digital platforms useful during the crisis are more likely to continue using the system post-crisis because they would have found a way of increasing their job performance, hence some monetary or non-monetary compensation from their organisation that they appreciate. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H2 The perceived usefulness of digital platforms during a crisis positively affects continuance intentions post-crisis.

Perceived ease of use is another technology acceptance construct that measures the extent to which a user believes using a particular IS is effortless (Davis, 1989). The rationale behind this construct is that effort is a finite resource that people try to allocate rationally to activities for which they are responsible. On this ground, several studies have established that users are more likely to continue using an IS if they find it easier to use during the initial stages than one that requires more effort. This argument has been validated in contexts like mobile health services (Y. Li et al., 2022) and enterprise resource planning systems (Cheng, 2018). Thus, we argue that knowledge workers would instead invest their efforts in doing their jobs productively rather than spend time learning how to use digital platforms to support them. Consequently, they are more likely to continue using digital platforms post-crisis if they now find them free of effort compared to prior experiences or other digital platforms. Therefore, we hypothesise that:

H3 The perceived ease of use of digital platforms during a crisis positively affects continuance intentions post-crisis.

In large organisations, employees perceive organisational support at two primary levels: at the level of the organization's management and at the level of the direct managers who employees report to concerning their daily operations (Lewis et al., 2003). Management support refers to the importance all managers in an organization accord and actions taken at the enterprise level to support the use of a particular IS (Lewis et al., 2003). This support is perceived through the policies, funding, and resource provisioning actions management takes to support IS use (Lewis et al., 2003). The more employees perceive management support, the more they perceive the possibility of these platforms to improve their performance through a simpler and more flexible work structure (Khwaldeh et al., 2020; Nirwanto & Andarwati, 2019). The extant literature provides evidence that employees would perceive an IS as useful and eventually intend to continue using it if they perceive

such management support (Lin, 2010; Rouibah et al., 2009). Based on these studies, we argue that employees will more likely perceive digital platforms used for remote work as useful post-crisis if they perceive significant management support in this regard. It will make them more confident in the platform's ability to enhance their performance and the possibility of receiving compensation for their increased job performance while maintaining a flexible work structure necessary for their well-being. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H4a Perceived management support positively affects knowledge workers' perceived usefulness of digital platforms used for remote work.

The extant literature also highlights that perceived management support increases employees' perceived ease of use since the resources provided reduce employees' efforts to use the IS (Lewis et al., 2003; Rouibah et al., 2009). Thus, we argue that knowledge workers perceive digital platforms used for remote work as easy to use if they perceive management's support through resources that facilitate their use of such platforms. Therefore, we hypothesise that:

H4b Perceived management support positively affects knowledge workers' perceived ease of using digital platforms for remote work.

At the same time, direct manager support also affects the behaviours of knowledge workers through the workers' perceptions of direct managers' interpretation and enforcement of management support efforts (Igarria et al., 1997; Lewis et al., 2003). Based on this fact, we argue that knowledge workers will perceive digital platforms as useful in increasing their job performance if direct managers positively reinterpret and implement the policies and actions put in place by management to promote the use of digital platforms for post-crisis remote work. Knowledge workers will likely not perceive direct manager support if they perceive any resistance to this practice or policies to foster remote work. Therefore, we hypothesise that:

H5a Perceived direct manager support positively affects knowledge workers' perceived usefulness of digital platforms used for remote work.

In the same light, we argue that perceived ease of use regarding digital platforms for remote work would increase if knowledge workers perceived that direct managers implement all the resources like training and technical support needed to use the platforms effortlessly. Failure to perceive this support from direct supervisors would make using the

platforms very effortful for the workers. Therefore, we hypothesise that:

H5b Perceived direct manager support positively affects knowledge workers' perceived ease of use of digital platforms used for remote work.

Lastly, to address direct managers' fears of losing control over employee performance and outcomes when using digital platforms for telework, we propose adopting a management-by-objective (MBO) approach as an organizational support strategy. MBO is a process whereby management and employees agree on common productivity assessment mechanisms based on clear objectives, tasks, and milestones without taking away the autonomy and flexibility of the employee (Rodgers & Hunter, 1991). The key to the success of this approach is being clear about the expected results and evaluation criteria (ILO, 2020). In this approach, productivity is higher when management support for meeting the objectives is higher (Rodgers & Hunter, 1991). We argue that MBO would help direct managers avoid micromanaging their knowledge workers who intend to use digital platforms for post-crisis remote work. Hence, the knowledge workers would feel more at ease working towards their objectives while maintaining the autonomy and flexibility needed to use digital platforms effectively to work remotely for their organisations. This kind of organizational support is indirect compared to management and direct manager support as its value to knowledge workers is less tangible yet critical. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H6 Management by objective positively affects knowledge workers' digital platform continuance intentions post-crisis.

The proposed conceptual development of OST and IS continuance, as well as the relationships discussed, are illustrated in Fig. 1.

4 Methodology

4.1 Data Collection

The proposed hypotheses were tested using data collected from knowledge workers in Europe and Africa. This decision was based on a global analysis of ongoing discourses between professionals and academics (Bieñkowska et al., 2022; Kark et al., 2021; Rimol, 2020), which seem to suggest that the profound changes in work patterns leading to post-crisis phenomena like the great Resignation could vary from one economic context to the other depending on how affected they were by the crisis. Europe and Africa were chosen because they were statistically affected by COVID-19 very differently – Africa registered significantly fewer cases than Europe (Worldometer, 2021). Therefore, the impact of the pandemic on both continents may not have affected their remote work behaviours in the same way. This study tests the conceptual model in both contexts to explore if there may be any differences in the behaviours of knowledge workers with respect to the effects of perceived organisational support on post-crisis digital platform continuance

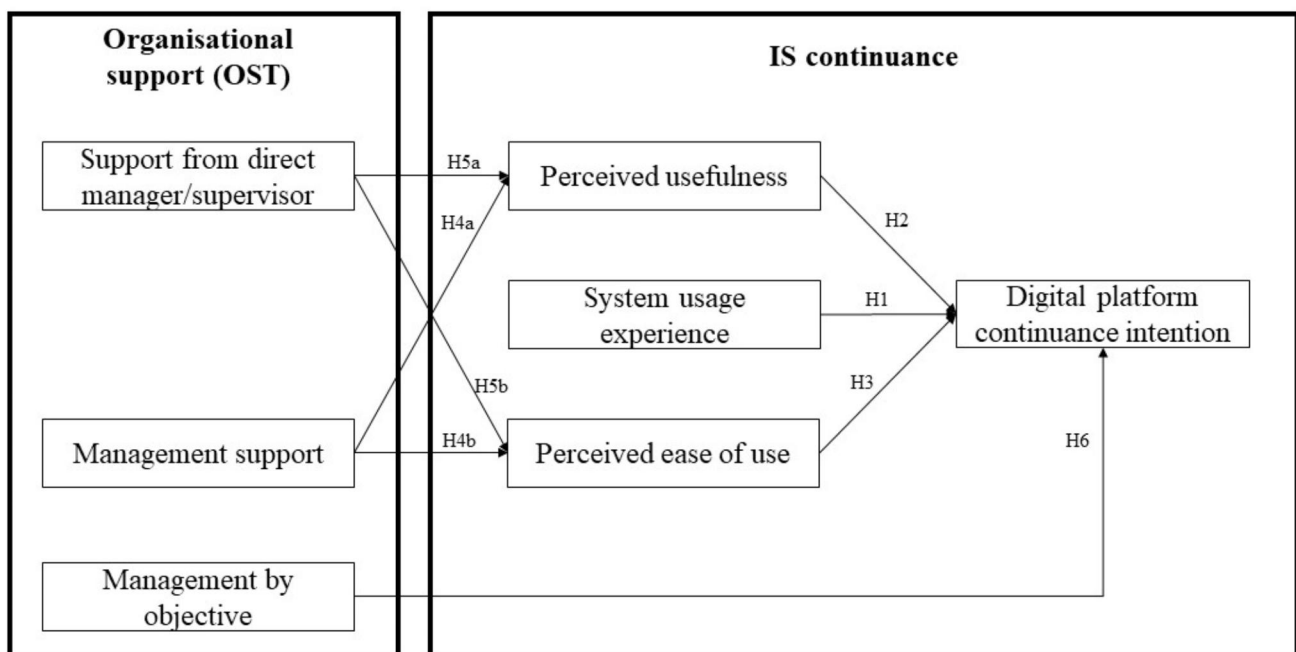


Fig. 1 Research model and corresponding hypotheses

intentions. The data was collected from June to August 2021, just months after the great resignation phenomenon began (Fuller & Kerr, 2022). We used a survey data collection method to distribute online questionnaires to participants. This data collection method was adopted because it makes it easy to understand relationships between social constructs, can be used to predict behaviour, and can help obtain generalisable responses (Newsted et al., 1998; Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1993). The advantages of this method have made it very popular in IS and management science research seeking to understand user behaviour in the face of management decisions (Laato et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022; Pirkkalainen et al., 2022).

To minimise issues related to common method bias in our measurement instrument, we adopted procedural remedies recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003) and MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012). The questions used in the questionnaire were adapted from existing measurement scales obtained from different sources. The questions were pre-tested using 20 participants from Europe and 20 from Africa to ensure that the questions were written in a language level that all respondents could understand. Management team was captured using the word “management” while the direct managers/supervisors was capture using the expression “my

manager”, which is the lexicon used in extant research (Baek et al., 2021; Desai & Purohit, 2004; Johnson, 2023; MAYER et al., 2008; Schlund & Zitek, 2021). Other measures we took to reduce common method bias include (i) informing the participants that the questionnaire was anonymous; (ii) emphasising that respondents should fill the questionnaire strictly based on their personal experiences, opinions, or knowledge; (iii) informing the respondents that this study could help them and their organisations, to increase their perception of the relevance of their participation in the survey; and (iv) providing financial rewards to motivate participants. Using Harman’s single-factor test, data collected from Africa showed a total variance of 36.36%, and that collected from Europe showed 36.96%. Both results are less than the 50% threshold (Podsakoff et al., 2003), indicating no risk of common method bias.

The sample size was determined using the G*Power 3 software, which is a tool that helps to statistically compute appropriate sample sizes (Faul et al., 2007). With an effect size of 0.40 and an error probability of 5%, this study’s recommended calculated sample size was 144 participants per region. On this basis, data was collected from 250 knowledge workers from Europe and Africa each. Two hundred thirty-one valid responses were obtained from Africa (92.4%) and 216 from Europe (86.4%). Most participants from Europe and Africa were between 25 and 44 years of age. Most participants from both continents held a master’s degree or equivalent certificate and had used digital platforms to perform some work-related tasks from their homes during the pandemic. While most European participants were male (58.3%), most African participants were female (69.7%). Table 4 presents the demographic statistics of the sample in terms of frequency (freq.) and percentage contribution.

The most popular digital platforms used by participants in Africa and Europe during COVID-19 are Zoom, company intranet, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Blackboard, Canvas, Slack, and Trello (Fig. 2).

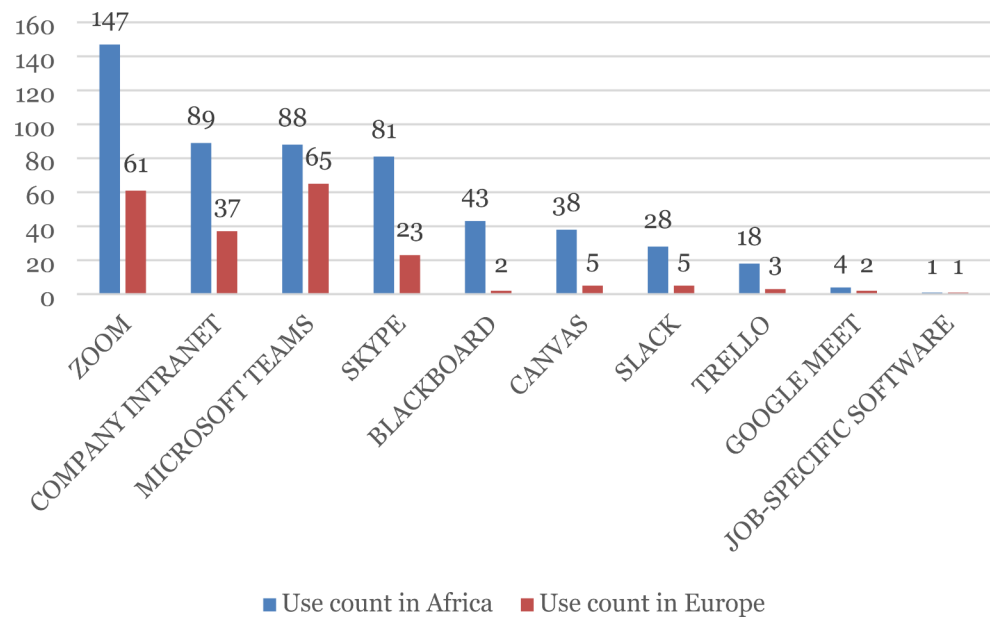
4.2 Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling algorithms. It is a data analysis method that has proven effective for estimating path models and revealing complex relationships between latent variables (Dash & Paul, 2021; Leguina, 2015). It has been widely used in IS and management science research (Chin et al., 2020; Dhar & Bose, 2022; Tam et al., 2020). This paper applies the PLS algorithms to analyse the collected data, following the two-stage guidelines Hair et al. (2021) proposed. Stage one examines the measurement model to assess its quality. Stage two evaluates the structural model,

Table 4 Descriptive statistics of the sample

| Age (in years) | World Region | |
|---|--------------|--------|
| | Europe | Africa |
| | Freq. | Freq. |
| Age (in years) | | |
| Under 18 | 1 | 0 |
| 18–24 | 34 | 61 |
| 25–34 | 88 | 113 |
| 35–44 | 58 | 46 |
| 45–54 | 27 | 9 |
| Over 55 | 8 | 2 |
| Total | 216 | 231 |
| Education | | |
| Less than a high school diploma | 5 | 11 |
| High school diploma or equivalent | 57 | 6 |
| Bachelor’s degree or equivalent | 59 | 62 |
| Master’s degree or equivalent | 79 | 146 |
| Doctorate (PhD) or equivalent | 15 | 6 |
| Other | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 216 | 231 |
| Prior experience with remote work (before COVID) | | |
| Yes | 127 | 162 |
| No | 89 | 69 |
| Total | 216 | 231 |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 87 | 161 |
| Male | 126 | 65 |
| Prefer not to say | 3 | 5 |
| Total | 216 | 231 |

Fig. 2 Most used digital platforms for telework in times of COVID-19



which involves testing the proposed hypotheses represented by the path relationships among latent variables. All constructs of our research model were measured reflectively.

The measurement model was evaluated in stage one based on item reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Item reliability was assessed using item loadings. Items with loadings above 0.7 were retained because it indicates that the item shows a satisfactory degree of reliability. Internal consistency reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) criteria. Given that this is an exploratory study, all latent variables with α and CR values between 0.6 and 0.95 represented acceptable reliability levels. Convergent validity was assessed based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) criterion. AVE values from 0.5 and above were accepted as they indicate that, on average, the construct explains at least 0.5 of the variances of its measurement items. Discriminant validity was measured using the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

In stage two, the structural model was evaluated based on collinearity, R^2 explanation of endogenous latent variables, standardised root mean squared residual (SRMR) to assess the exact fit of the structural model, and p-values to assess the significance of path coefficients. Collinearity was assessed by computing each item's variance inflation factor (VIF). VIFs greater than five indicated collinearity among predictor variables. Significance levels and relevance of path coefficients were determined using p-values. Path coefficients with p-values less than 0.05 were considered significant. The predictive relevance of the path model was determined by the blindfolding procedure using an omission distance, D, of 7. The model's predictive accuracy was supported if the endogenous constructs' cross-validated redundancy (Q^2)

values were above zero. SmartPLS 4¹ was used to perform all measurement and structural model assessments.

5 Results

5.1 Measurement Model Assessment Results

This section is concerned with analyzing the reflective measurement model to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. This analysis focuses on four dimensions (Hair et al., 2019). The first concerns the outer loadings of the constructs' measurement items, whose value must be greater than 0.7. The second concerns the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) of construct items, whose value must be less than 5. The third measures the reliability of the internal consistency and concerns the two indicators, Cronbach's alpha (α) and rho_A and CR, with a minimum significance value of 0.7. The fourth concerns the convergence validity, with the indicator AVE (Average Variance Extracted) having a minimum significance value of 0.5. Table 5 shows the results of the measurement model and the evaluation criteria outcomes.

The results show that most of the measurement model meets the assessment criteria in the African and European contexts. Specifically, all outer (item) loadings are above 0.7, indicating that all indicators demonstrate sufficient levels of reliability. Also, all AVE values are above 0.5, supporting convergent validity. All Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are between 0.6 and 0.95, indicating that all construct measures demonstrate sufficient internal consistency and reliability.

¹ <https://www.smartpls.com/downloads/>.

Table 5 Assessment results of the measurement model

| Construct definitions, measurement scales, and reliability & validity assessment results | Item loadings | | VIF | |
|--|---------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Africa | Europe | Africa | Europe |
| Digital platform continuance (Bhattacharjee, 2001): users' intention to continue using digital platforms for remote work. Africa: $\alpha=0.836$; CR=0.901; AVE=0.753 Europe: $\alpha=0.87$; CR=0.92; AVE=0.793 | | | | |
| <i>I intend to continue using digital platforms to work remotely rather than discontinue their use.</i> | 0.843 | 0.89 | 1.747 | 2.073 |
| <i>I intend to continue using digital platforms to work remotely rather than return to work from my office (traditional work as before COVID).</i> | 0.860 | 0.872 | 2.035 | 2.349 |
| <i>I want to continue using digital platforms to work remotely if I can.</i> | 0.901 | 0.910 | 2.420 | 2.801 |
| Direct manager/supervisor support (Lewis et al., 2003): the extent to which employees believe their direct superiors are committed to supporting digital platforms for remote work. Africa: $\alpha=0.913$; CR=0.935; AVE=0.743 Europe: $\alpha=0.914$; CR=0.935; AVE=0.744 | | | | |
| <i>My manager is committed to the vision of using digital platforms to work remotely.</i> | 0.881 | 0.888 | 3.121 | 3.323 |
| <i>My manager is committed to supporting my efforts in using digital platforms to work remotely.</i> | 0.865 | 0.889 | 3.031 | 3.362 |
| <i>My manager strongly encourages the use of digital platforms to work remotely.</i> | 0.889 | 0.860 | 3.134 | 2.678 |
| <i>My manager will recognise my efforts in using digital platforms to work remotely.</i> | 0.864 | 0.776 | 2.994 | 1.992 |
| <i>The use of digital platforms to work remotely is important to my manager.</i> | 0.810 | 0.893 | 1.990 | 3.179 |
| Management support (Igbaria et al., 1997): the extent to which employees believe they receive general support from the organization's management teams regarding using digital platforms for remote work. Africa: $\alpha=0.913$; CR=0.935; AVE=0.741 Europe: $\alpha=0.887$; CR=0.917; AVE=0.688 | | | | |
| <i>Management is aware of the benefits of using digital platforms for remote working.</i> | 0.856 | 0.840 | 2.797 | 2.198 |
| <i>Management always supports and encourages the use of digital platforms for remote work.</i> | 0.823 | 0.848 | 2.492 | 2.413 |
| <i>Management provides most of the necessary help and resources to enable me to use desired digital platforms for remote work.</i> | 0.920 | 0.862 | 3.921 | 2.509 |
| <i>Management is keen to see that I am happy with using digital platforms for remote work.</i> | 0.830 | 0.778 | 2.184 | 1.889 |
| <i>Management provides good access to computer hardware and digital platforms needed for remote work.</i> | 0.872 | 0.818 | 2.844 | 1.990 |
| <i>Management provides good access to various digital platforms for remote work when I need them.</i> | 0.825 | 0.804 | 2.703 | 2.277 |
| Perceived ease of use (Igbaria et al., 1997): the degree to which a person believes that using digital platforms for remote work is free of effort. Africa: $\alpha=0.888$; CR=0.922; AVE=0.747 Europe: $\alpha=0.927$; CR=0.948; AVE=0.82 | | | | |
| <i>Learning to use digital platforms to work remotely is easy for me.</i> | 0.881 | 0.913 | 2.923 | 3.32 |
| <i>I find it easy to get digital platforms to do what I want them to do.</i> | 0.858 | 0.905 | 2.012 | 3.237 |
| <i>It is easy for me to become skilful at using digital platforms to work remotely.</i> | 0.864 | 0.905 | 2.444 | 3.258 |
| <i>I find using digital platforms to work remotely accessible.</i> | 0.854 | 0.899 | 2.382 | 3.019 |
| Perceived usefulness (Igbaria et al., 1997): the degree to which an employee believes that using digital platforms for remote work enhances their job performance. Africa: $\alpha=0.872$; CR=0.909; AVE=0.834 Europe: $\alpha=0.9$; CR=0.93; AVE=0.769 | | | | |
| <i>Using digital platforms to work remotely improves my job performance.</i> | 0.875 | 0.845 | 2.708 | 2.283 |
| <i>Using digital platforms to work remotely increases my productivity on the job.</i> | 0.852 | 0.879 | 2.586 | 2.615 |
| <i>I find using digital platforms to work remotely useful in my job.</i> | 0.788 | 0.881 | 1.690 | 2.598 |
| <i>Using digital platforms to work remotely enhances my effectiveness on the job.</i> | 0.885 | 0.901 | 2.631 | 2.988 |
| Management by objective: the extent to which a person believes they have a clear understanding of their job objectives, expectations, tasks, and milestones. Africa: $\alpha=0.907$; CR=0.935; AVE=0.782 Europe: $\alpha=0.861$; CR=0.902; AVE=0.698 | | | | |
| Since I started working remotely... | | | | |
| <i>...My job performance objectives are clear to me.</i> | 0.923 | 0.88 | 4.832 | 3.431 |
| <i>...My job expectations are clear to me.</i> | 0.857 | 0.793 | 2.953 | 4.588 |
| <i>...My job performance is discussed regularly.</i> | 0.851 | 0.764 | 2.768 | 4.369 |
| System usage experience (Bhattacharjee, 2001): the extent to which an individual is satisfied with digital platforms and technologies for remote work. Africa: $\alpha=0.805$; CR=0.909; AVE=0.834 Europe: $\alpha=0.797$; CR=0.908; AVE=0.831 | | | | |
| <i>How often are you satisfied with your experience with digital platforms for remote work?</i> | 0.940 | 0.909 | 1.833 | 1.782 |
| <i>How much time do you enjoy spending per day using digital platforms for remote work?</i> | 0.885 | 0.915 | 1.833 | 1.782 |

Table 6 Discriminant validity test results using the Fornell-Larcker criterion¹ (Africa)

| Construct | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Digital platform continuance (1) | 0.868 | | | | | | |
| Management by objective (2) | 0.471 | 0.884 | | | | | |
| Direct manager support (3) | 0.522 | 0.626 | 0.862 | | | | |
| Perceived ease of use (4) | 0.382 | 0.272 | 0.307 | 0.864 | | | |
| Perceived usefulness (5) | 0.524 | 0.433 | 0.451 | 0.407 | 0.851 | | |
| System usage experience (6) | 0.200 | 0.156 | 0.323 | 0.242 | 0.234 | 0.913 | |
| Management support (7) | 0.459 | 0.560 | 0.764 | 0.373 | 0.420 | 0.285 | 0.861 |

¹Correlations within the table and square root of AVE on the diagonal

Table 7 Discriminant validity test results using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Europe)

| Construct | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Digital platform continuance (1) | 0.890 | | | | | | |
| Management by objective (2) | 0.589 | 0.835 | | | | | |
| Direct manager support (3) | 0.510 | 0.508 | 0.863 | | | | |
| Perceived ease of use (4) | 0.547 | 0.482 | 0.489 | 0.905 | | | |
| Perceived usefulness (5) | 0.597 | 0.517 | 0.533 | 0.772 | 0.877 | | |
| System usage experience (6) | 0.378 | 0.261 | 0.311 | 0.326 | 0.348 | 0.912 | |
| Management support (7) | 0.512 | 0.537 | 0.750 | 0.495 | 0.512 | 0.313 | 0.830 |

Table 8 Path coefficients and their significance¹

| Hypotheses | | Africa | Europe |
|------------|---|------------------|------------------|
| | | Path coefficient | Path coefficient |
| H1 | System usage experience -> Digital platform continuance intention | 0.041 | 0.153** |
| H2 | Perceived usefulness -> Digital platform continuance intention | 0.327*** | 0.267** |
| H3 | Perceived ease of use -> Digital platform continuance intention | 0.163* | 0.122 |
| H4a | Management support -> Perceived usefulness | 0.183 | 0.257* |
| H4b | Management support -> Perceived ease of use | 0.333*** | 0.294*** |
| H5a | Direct manager support -> Perceived usefulness | 0.311*** | 0.341*** |
| H5b | Direct manager support -> Perceived ease of use | 0.053 | 0.269*** |
| H6 | Management by objective -> Digital platform continuance intention | 0.279*** | 0.352*** |

¹Values in red indicate that $p > 0.05$, thus unsupported hypothesis

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Discriminant validity was established based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion since the square root of AVE for each construct was greater than the constructs' correlations (see Tables 6 and 7). The Fornell-Larcker criterion is verified with the same significance level in African and European contexts. This criterion guarantees that the concepts are empirically distinct from one another. Indeed, assessing the convergent validity of constructs is one of the essential steps in PLS-SEM (partial least squares - structural equation modeling) analysis.

5.2 Structural Model Assessment Results

All VIF values were below the threshold of 5, indicating that collinearity is not a critical issue in the structural model (as shown in Table 5). Table 8 presents the path coefficients (β) and their 95% significance levels (p).

This result was obtained by running a bootstrapping algorithm using 10,000 subsamples. In the African context,

H1, H4a, and H5b had p -values greater than 0.05, indicating that the path coefficients were insignificant. All other hypotheses (H2, H3, H4b, H5a, and H6) had p -values below 0.05, indicating that they had valid path coefficients, and the corresponding hypotheses were validated. In Europe, all hypotheses had path coefficients below 0.05 except H3, with a p -value of 0.168. Thus, only H3 was not validated in the European context. However, the mediation analysis results (see Table 9) show that only direct manager support significantly indirectly affects digital platform continuance intention, which goes through perceived usefulness.

Figure 3 presents the structural model results, including path coefficients and the explainability of the model.

Based on the reported R^2 values, the proposed model explains 37.3% and 49.1% of digital platform continuance intention in Africa and Europe, respectively. It also explains 21.7% and 31.3% of knowledge workers' perceived usefulness of digital platforms in Africa and Europe, respectively. Furthermore, the model explains 14% and 27.7% of

Table 9 Mediating effect results

| Mediating relationships | Africa | |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| | Path coefficient | Path coefficient |
| Direct manager support -> Perceived usefulness -> Digital platform continuance | 0.102* | 0.091* |
| Management support -> Perceived usefulness -> Digital platform continuance | 0.060 | 0.069 |
| Direct manager support -> Perceived ease of use -> Digital platform continuance | 0.009 | 0.033 |
| Management support -> Perceived ease of use -> Digital platform continuance | 0.054 | 0.036 |

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

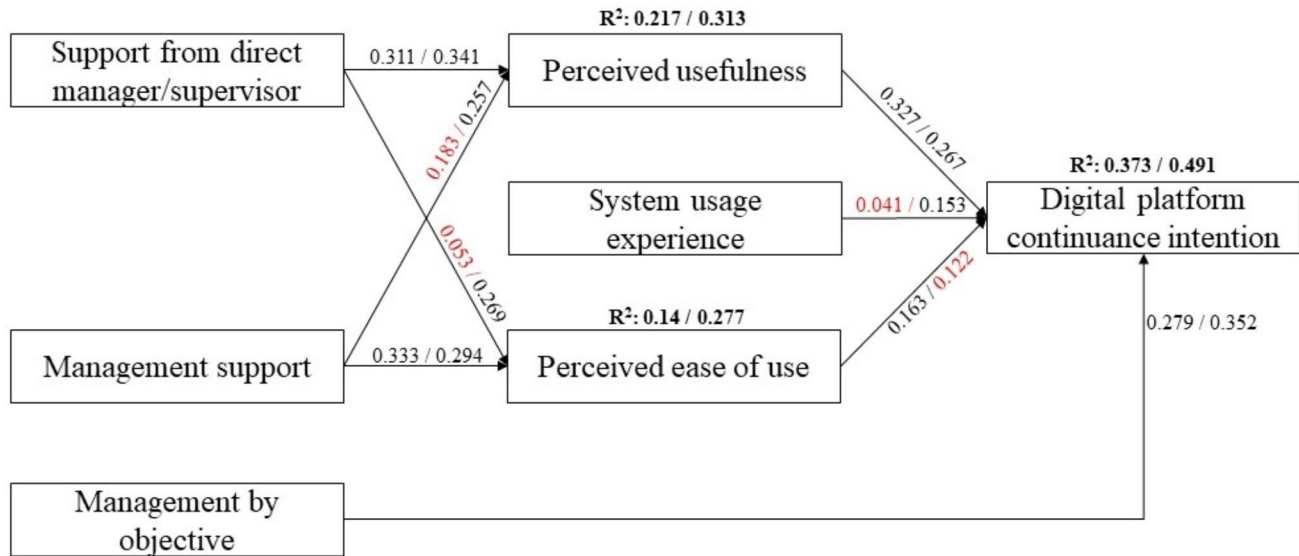


Fig. 3 Structural model results*

*Results are presented as path coefficients model for Africa/Europe. Values in red represent insignificant relationships ($p > 0.05$)

knowledge workers’ perceived ease of use of digital platforms in Africa and Europe, respectively. In Africa, the model scored an SRMR value of 0.067, while it scored 0.067 in Europe. These scores are below the 0.08 cutoff value for models with over 100 observations (Cho et al., 2020), indicating an acceptable model fit. The predictive relevance of the PLS path model was confirmed by the fact that all Q^2 values for endogenous constructs were above zero (Q^2 predict for digital platform continuance intention: Africa = 0.265; Europe = 0.412).

6 Discussion

In the face of a post-crisis phenomenon like the Great Resignation, this paper’s primary objective was to provide empirical evidence for managers to understand how their support for digital platform continuance for post-crisis remote work can affect their knowledge workers. This study was motivated by the disparity in what senior managers (ROI), middle managers (control) and employees (flexibility) want, which is creating tensions leading to the growing employee churn. We attempt to address this issue using OST

and the IS acceptance literature. We try to provide empirical evidence to support that if organisations support digital platform continuance for post-crisis remote work, employees will find the job autonomy and flexibility they seek and interpret this support as a positive sign that the organisation genuinely cares about their work and well-being. In return, the employees will feel a compelling desire to continue working remotely for their organisations using digital platforms, reducing their chances of leaving for another organisation supporting this practice. On this basis, we proposed a research model and tested derived hypotheses by applying PLS algorithms to 447 knowledge workers from Africa and Europe.

In the African context, our primary finding is that digital platform continuance intention is positively affected by perceived usefulness and ease of use, as hypothesised. However, system usage experience does not significantly affect digital platform continuance. Therefore, knowledge workers in this context are more likely to continue using digital platforms to work remotely for their organisations based on their value for their job performance and the effort required to use them. However, their feelings about the system during a crisis do not affect their continuance intentions. Meanwhile, in

Europe, knowledge workers' digital platform continuance intention was positively affected by system usage experience during the crisis and the system's perceived usefulness, but not its perceived ease of use.

It implies that contrary to the African context, the behaviour of knowledge workers in Europe is more consistent with the ECM of IS continuance (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Their digital platform continuance intention is driven by affective (usage experience) and cognitive (perceived usefulness) beliefs. For such workers, ease of use has an insignificant effect on continuance intention because it subsides as they gain experience with the platform, which displaces their attention to the ability of the platform to increase their job performance (Karahanna et al., 1999). Meanwhile, digital platform continuance intention for knowledge workers in Africa is based solely on cognitive belief (perceived ease of use and usefulness). Thus, ease of use remains relevant in this context and is as essential to knowledge workers as the platform's efficiency in improving their job performance. This fixation on cognitive beliefs could be due to differences in knowledge workers' realities in both contexts. For example, while unreliable internet connections and digital infrastructure are a reality for most knowledge workers in Africa, they are unknown or rare among those in Europe (Maphalala & Adigun, 2021; von Solms & Meyer, 2021). Also, most of the platforms used by the knowledge workers in Africa followed *Western* logic, making it harder for them to learn how to integrate these platforms into their work processes (Asamoah & Andoh-Baidoo, 2018; Scholtz & Atukwase, 2016). Thus, knowledge workers remain keen on the effort needed to continue using digital platforms post-crisis.

Regarding organisational support, mediation analysis reveals that direct manager/supervisor support is the essential support knowledge workers need to perceive to increase their digital platform continuance intention in both Europe and Africa. The effect of direct manager support on digital platform continuance intention is mediated by perceived usefulness. Therefore, as hypothesised (H5a), knowledge workers perceive digital platforms as more useful in improving their job performance when their direct superiors positively reinterpret and implement the policies and actions by management to promote the use of digital platforms for post-crisis remote work. These perceptions could be positively developed by implementing monetary or non-monetary compensations to encourage employee work performance during remote work.

In Europe, direct supervisor support positively affects perceived ease of use, whereas the effect is insignificant in the African context. It implies that knowledge workers in Europe are sensitive to the efforts made by their direct superiors to dispatch resources for support like training and technical support needed to use the platforms effortlessly.

However, perceived ease of use does not affect their digital platform continuance intention. On the other hand, knowledge workers in Africa are not sensitive to such efforts from their direct superiors. However, increased perceived ease of use positively affects their continuance intention. This indifference from knowledge workers in Africa could be because the provision of resources required to facilitate the use of digital platforms, as well as control over how these resources are allocated, is usually entirely dependent on management decisions (Acquaah & Agyapong, 2016; Chinomona et al., 2017). Thus, the workers have no expectations from their direct managers since they have no decision power. This would explain the strong significant effect of management support on perceived ease of use in the African context.

Also, contrary to Europe, where management support positively affects perceived usefulness, as hypothesised, the effect is not significant in the African context. It could be explained by the fact that managers in many African organisations are not computer literate and prefer written and oral communication (Leidner & Kayworth, 2006; Vreede et al., 1998). Therefore, they do not provide sufficient resources to support the use of digital platforms for remote work. Furthermore, as hypothesised, our results show that MBO is an essential determinant of digital platform continuance intention among knowledge workers in both Europe and Africa. This confirms that knowledge workers are highly motivated by job autonomy and flexibility, which they can obtain by using digital platforms to work remotely.

6.1 Implications for IS Research

From a research perspective, this study provides empirical evidence in favour of the necessity of organisational support to promote IS continuance in post-crisis situations. By showing that perceived organisational support positively affects IS continuance, it extends the extant IS literature on the topic that is currently mostly limited to intention to use and system usage (Lee et al., 2010, 2013; Scott & Walczak, 2009). Beyond, our study provides evidence that when investigating the effect of perceived organisational support on IS continuance, measuring different levels of management support can offer deeper insights into continuance intentions. This study also showed that direct manager support is more relevant than general management support in affecting knowledge workers' post-crisis digital platform continuance intentions. These results would allow future studies to understand these effects better and know where to focus future research efforts. Furthermore, this study provides evidence that MBO is an essential determinant of IS continuance intention in post-crisis situations. Thus, this construct, which has not been used in previous IS continuance literature, could be useful and recommended for future

studies investigating IS continuance in contexts where organisations face challenges monitoring and assessing the performance of IS users (Kelly, 2021; Krishnamoorthy, 2020).

This study also extends the ECM IS continuance model (Bhattacharjee, 2001). It shows that perceived ease of use remains a relevant determinant of IS continuance in contexts challenged by digital infrastructure and integration issues. Contrary to ECM's argument, IS users in such contexts may not be able to shift their attention entirely to perceived usefulness because addressing the issue above remains a concern regarding their ability to use an IS effortlessly. Therefore, future studies investigating contexts where IS users face similar challenges should consider assessing the effect of perceived ease of use on continuance intentions.

6.2 Implications for Practice

This study provides empirical evidence that direct manager or superior support is essential in driving organisations' perceived usefulness of digital platforms for post-crisis remote work. Current work patterns show that knowledge workers prioritise jobs where digital platforms are useful for remote work, giving them flexibility and promoting their well-being. Thus, direct managers should support this practice through flexible work schedules, demonstrating care and trust, and creating a sense of belonging while the employee works remotely. Furthermore, organisations should adopt MBO policies to limit micromanagement possibilities and focus on collaborating with knowledge workers to set attainable goals and acceptable assessment criteria. MBO practices should be aligned with potential career advancements, which is a fundamental reason why employees are leaving their current employers. To enforce direct manager support and MBO policies, CIOs can also take specific actions recommended by the International Labour Organisation - ILO (2020), such as (i) reviewing the digital platform needs of employees; (ii) revising platform use and data access policies to ensure that employees can access necessary resources easily using digital platforms; (iii) providing financial incentives to facilitate remote work; and (iv) providing resources for training to help employees learn how to use proposed digital platforms and technologies to achieve their objectives promptly.

6.3 Limitations

Although we followed well-established and rigorous methodological processes in the IS and management science disciplines, one limitation of this study is that it uses cross-sectional data to validate the research model. This can be a limitation because our results only capture the current state

of events. However, a longitudinal study was not deemed relevant at the time of this study, given that it was conducted immediately after the crisis and at the beginning of the current great resignation phenomenon. Therefore, future research could conduct a longitudinal perspective on the proposed research model.

Second, this research focused on knowledge workers in Africa and Europe. Therefore, we in no way claim the generalisability of our findings, given that the health crisis and great resignation phenomena are global. Besides, our results are evidence that perceived organisational support does not affect post-crisis digital platform continuance intention among knowledge workers the same way in all world regions. Therefore, similar studies should be conducted in other world regions to identify their specificities to contextualise and extend our proposed research model. In the same light, it would be interesting to investigate if the effect of perceived organisational support on digital platform continuance intention could be moderated by the type of knowledge worker or industry in which the knowledge worker practices.

7 Conclusions

To conclude, this study identifies two conditions that motivate knowledge workers to continue using digital platforms to work remotely for their organisations post-crisis. First, the organisation should adopt an MBO approach to managing and assessing job performance. It would enable employees to meet their job performance targets while maintaining the job autonomy and flexibility they seek, providing direct managers with an effective control mechanism and helping management teams secure their crisis-driven IT investments. Second, support from direct superiors is essential for driving digital platform continuance intention among knowledge workers. The effect of this effect is mediated by perceived usefulness. Thus, the more a knowledge worker's direct superior encourages digital platforms for remote work, the more the worker perceives the organisation's support for their care and well-being. Thus, the more the worker is motivated to continue using the platforms to improve their job performance. These findings provide empirical evidence on new insights that could help decision-makers develop strategies to retain talents in the face of post-crisis challenges like the Great Resignation.

Declarations

Conflict of interest None.

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