



Future of Work: Why Skills Trump Jobs in the Age of AI

With the rise in AI and automation new skills are becoming in demand while traditional jobs disappear. This growing skills-based economy means your success in the workplace is dependent on your ability to learn technology, remain computer literate and adapt in response to new technology over your career.

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Introduction:

The concept of a “Job” is undergoing a fundamental transformation nowadays. Predictable career paths have been the norm for most of history in a world where job roles were relatively stable because of predictable responsibilities and long-term positions. The rapid developments available through artificial intelligence (AI), automated tools and digital platforms are creating new opportunities to create workplaces that change at rapid rates instead of being bound by rigid job descriptions/positions.

Companies now focus on developing and using the best combination of skills needed to accomplish their objectives. **“Tasks, not jobs are being automated, redefined and augmented.”** That shift has created a new paradigm and a new model of the workforce where skills, not titles are the true currency of the modern workforce.

With Pakistan’s youth population rapidly increasing and technology adoption accelerating, we are in a situation where digital change feels both a huge opportunity and a challenge. To genuinely compete and grow the economy, the real secret is staying agile and never stopping the learning process.

“The future of work is not about having the right job — it is about having the right skills at the right time.”

Technology Overview:

Artificial intelligence and automation technologies are the core areas of this change and transformation. Artificial intelligence has taken over many of the same cognitive tasks through their ability to automate them, thus eliminating these repetitive jobs from needing to be performed by non-automated humans. The same types of tasks can now be accomplished through ML models, Natural Language Processing (NLP) or Intelligent Automation Technologies (IATs).

AI can also create new software applications, perform financial analysis, define appropriate action based on the analysis of collected data and assist customers by offering automated solutions. As a result of AI’s efficiency, there are going to be fewer workers performing what we now consider “traditional” occupations that require limited



skill sets (low-level workers) or performing the repetitive functions of a low-level occupation, in comparison with the masses of employees who will be involved with the future development/managing of artificial intelligence in strategic ways.

Advancements in cloud computing, collaborative/remote work, digital platforms and globally distributed/non-centralized workforces have all contributed to the rapid increase in new job opportunities related to new technologies. As a conclusion, in Pakistan the freelancing community have grown significantly and offer professionals services in software development, design and digital marketing. This collectively indicates a definite shift from generalist roles to the **gig economy** based on discrete, functional skills.

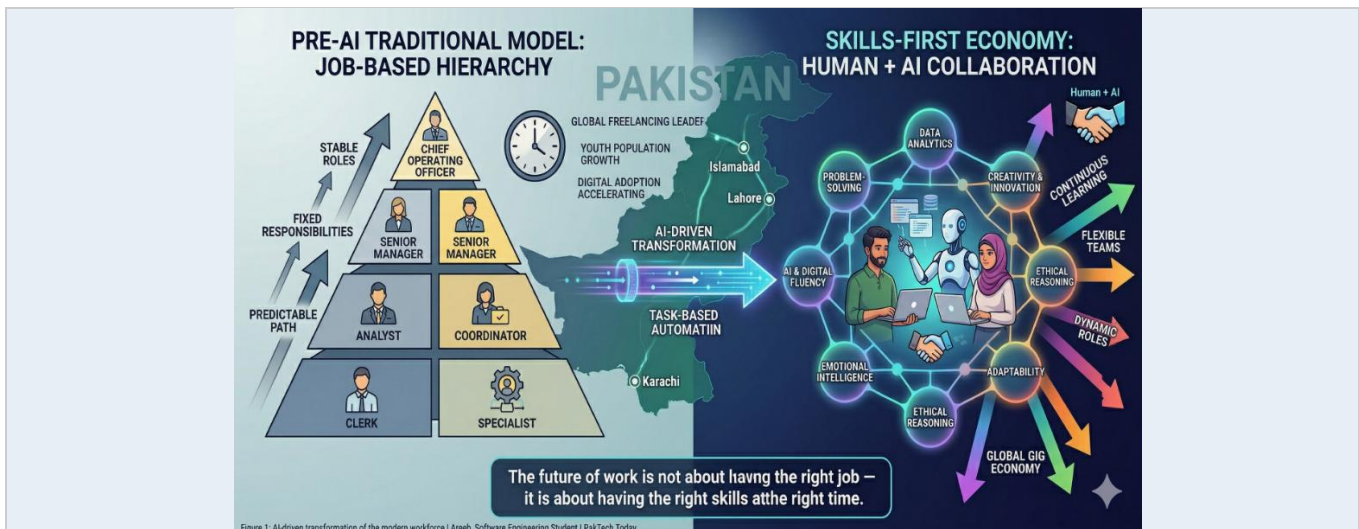


Figure 1: AI-driven transformation of the modern workforce. Credit: Author

Key Findings & Impact:

Current worldwide statistics on the labor force show a notable move towards employee hires based on their skill sets instead of by the position they fill. More companies are favouring attributes like critical thinking, solving problems and using technology as more important than the degree they earned or the title of the position they hold. These things help them to grow and become competitive in the market.

Recent research suggests that **roughly 40% to 50%** of the work we do today will either be handled by machines or seem completely different within the next ten years. However, rather than eliminating work entirely this shift is creating new hybrid roles that combine technical and human-centric skills.

For Pakistan, this trend has many significant implications:

- **Expansion of freelancers' economy:** According to some estimates, Pakistan is one of the world's leading countries for freelancers, where individuals experience success based on their abilities instead of having a formal degree or being employed in an organization.
- **Demand of Digital skills:** The digital skills needed at present are fields such as artificial intelligence (AI), data science and software engineering; which are rapidly increasing in scope of operations, hence providing new avenues for individuals with those respective skillsets.



- **Risk of skill-gaps:** it's a definite fact that some segments of work force will have trouble with adopting new technologies and learning how to utilize them, lacking the proper training and re-tooling support structures, and thus will cause a social divide and inequality.

Human qualities (creativity, emotional intelligence and ability to reason morally) would never be replaced by technology; they only serve as complementary forces to our technologies, thereby strengthening the argument for a future where humans don't compete against AI but complement each other in a **human-AI work force**.

What's Next?

The notion that you obtain your degree, have one job for the rest of your life, and retire to receive pension benefits is obsolete. Individuals today must be lifelong learners constantly improving themselves over their career course. Schools in Pakistan and across the world have begun to shift away from the traditional paradigm of conventional education towards this modern framework of more hands-on and cross-disciplinary student experiences, coupled with crucial digital skills needed for the international workplace, in order to prepare them to thrive in a changing world economy.

Likewise, the government and employers will need to invest in upskilling their youth and workforce so that they remain competitive in technology-related fields and can help grow their economies.

For individuals, the path forward is clear:

- Working life is not a single activity where you stay at one position, it's what is important that you can **gain transferable and modifiable skills**, because by that you can adapt changes in working environment and activities.
- Use **AI tools for collaboration in the workplace** rather than treating them like an enemy.
- Commit to **continuous learning, transformation and experimentation**.

In the end, the future would not be won by those individuals who have impressive job titles, but by the people who can constantly reinvent and evolve themselves through new skills.

About the Author

Muhammad Areeb is a Software Engineering student and an aspiring developer. He has a great interest in AI and cutting-edge technologies and is always looking for modern ways of achieving a task, a new way of implementing it, he believes that the path of growth has the ability to bring up the modern jobs. He can be reached at muhammadareeb4058@gmail.com.

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