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Reframing Human Resource Management in the Digital and AI Era: Evidence from Organizational Practice

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Abstract :
This study aims to deeply understand how organizations manage human resources in the digital and artificial intelligence era, focusing on four main aspects: upskilling, reskilling, digital-based performance management, and the ethical use of AI. The study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore actual organizational practices in the context of digital transformation. Data are collected through in-depth interviews with managers and employees, participant observation of training activities and digital performance systems, and relevant documentation supporting the analysis. The results show that upskilling and reskilling are key strategies to ensure employees remain competent in facing changing roles and technological demands. Digital performance management improves transparency, efficiency, and evaluation accuracy. While the use of AI in HR management requires clear ethical guidelines to maintain fairness, accountability, and employee trust. This study provides theoretical implications by expanding the literature on HR management in the digital and AI era, as well as practical implications for organizations in designing adaptive, holistic, and human-oriented HR strategies, so that digital transformation can improve employee performance, productivity, and well-being.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology and artificial intelligence has brought about significant changes in people's lives, particularly in the workplace and organizational management. Nearly all sectors, both public and private, are now required to adapt to digital-based work systems that emphasize speed, efficiency, and accuracy (Rahman, 2026; Shoha, 2026). In this context, human resources are a key factor in the success of digital transformation. This research is important for the wider community because the quality of human resource management will determine an organization's ability to provide services, create sustainable jobs, and maintain national competitiveness. Various reports indicate that human resource unpreparedness for digital technology can trigger competency gaps, structural unemployment, and decline in organizational performance. Therefore, research on human resource management in the digital

and AI era is crucial in providing relevant understanding and solutions for society so that technological transformation can bring inclusive and equitable benefits.

Although digitalization and AI offer numerous opportunities, many organizations still face serious challenges in managing their human resources. The primary issue is the mismatch between employee competencies and the demands of technology-based work. Many employees struggle to adapt to digital systems, while organizations lack a focused and sustainable HR development strategy. Furthermore, technology implementation often focuses on technical aspects, without being balanced by a supportive work culture and HR policies (Holidi, 2025; Khofsah, 2025). This situation has the potential to create resistance, decreased work motivation, and anxiety about the threats of automation and AI. Another emerging issue is the lack of understanding of the ethics of using AI in personnel decision-making. These issues provide an important background for this research, which aims to re-examine how HR management should be designed and implemented in the digital era.

On-the-ground phenomena indicate that many organizations have adopted digital technology and AI in various HR functions, such as recruitment, performance appraisals, and employee training. However, this implementation has not been fully accompanied by a comprehensive change in managerial approaches (Hefniy & Alwahedi, 2025; Manshur, 2026). While technology is seen as a quick solution to improve work efficiency, employees often feel excluded from the change process. The digital training provided tends to be formal and does not address employees' real needs (Aisyah & Trianingsih, 2023; Susanti et al., 2023). Furthermore, the use of algorithm-based systems in performance appraisals raises concerns about objectivity and fairness. This phenomenon highlights the gap between current HR management practices and the real challenges employees face in the digital era. This situation underscores the importance of an in-depth study of truly human-centric HR management practices.

Various previous studies have discussed HR management in the context of digitalization and technological development. Several studies emphasize the importance of upskilling and reskilling as key strategies for improving employee competitiveness in the digital era (Hikmah & Mudarris, 2026; Kusumawati, 2025; Syafiih, 2025). Other studies examine the use of digital systems in performance management, which are considered capable of increasing transparency and effectiveness in HR management. Furthermore, several studies highlight the potential of AI in supporting personnel decision-making. However, most of this research still focuses on technical aspects and organizational efficiency (Basri et al., 2024; Khotimah & Suhermanto, 2024). The approaches used tend to place technology at the center of change, while the human dimension and employee experience are not a primary focus. Consequently, understanding how HR management practices are being comprehensively redefined in real-world organizational contexts remains limited.

Furthermore, previous research has generally used a quantitative approach to measure the impact of technology on employee performance or

productivity. This approach provides important statistical insights but fails to capture the dynamics, challenges, and managerial strategies that occur at the organizational level. Little research has explored how organizations are actually redefining the role of HR management amidst the pressures of digitalization and the use of AI (Ataman, 2024; Fawaid, 2025; Sain & Abdullah, 2024). This research gap highlights the need for research that explores managerial experiences, perceptions, and practices in depth. Therefore, this study is strategically positioned to complement previous studies through a qualitative approach focused on organizational practices. This research's contribution is expected to provide a new perspective on HR management that is not only adaptive to technology but also sensitive to human needs and values.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to reframe or reformulate the concept of HR management in the digital era and artificial intelligence, based on evidence from organizational practices. This research goes beyond technology as a tool, but places humans at the center of digital transformation. By examining how organizations manage upskilling, reskilling, digital performance management, and the ethics of AI use, this study offers an integrative perspective rarely discussed comprehensively. The organizational practice-based approach allows this research to provide contextual understanding relevant to real-world conditions. Therefore, this research is important to complete in order to provide conceptual and practical contributions to the development of sustainable, ethical, and human resource management oriented towards strengthening human capacity in the digital era.

Based on this description, this research aims to answer the main question of how human resource management is being redefined in the face of digital transformation and artificial intelligence at the organizational level. The initial argument of this research is that the success of digital transformation is not only determined by technological sophistication, but is highly dependent on HR management strategies that prioritize competency development, fair performance systems, and the ethical use of AI. This research contributes by providing an in-depth understanding of adaptive and humanistic HR management practices. The research results are expected to serve as a reference for organizations in designing HR policies that are more responsive to technological changes, while strengthening the role of humans as the primary subject in digital transformation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of human resource management practices in the face of digital transformation and artificial intelligence (Kutscher & Parey, 2024; Okoko et al., 2023; Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). Case studies allow researchers to explore phenomena in detail in real-world contexts, including how organizations manage upskilling, reskilling, digital-based performance management, and the ethics of AI use. This design is relevant because the focus of the research is not on generalizing the population, but rather on an in-depth understanding of

specific organizational practices. Thus, this research can generate rich and applicable contextual insights and contribute to the development of HR management theory and practice in the digital era.

This research was conducted at MAN Ende, which has implemented digital transformation and the use of AI in HR management. This location was chosen because it has real-world experience in implementing digital training programs, system-based performance assessments, and utilizing AI in HR decision-making. This organization is also representative because it has a complex structure and diverse staff, allowing researchers to obtain comprehensive data. Furthermore, the organization agreed to serve as a research location, facilitating field data collection. This context provides an opportunity to analyze HR management practices in depth and relevant to current phenomena in the digital era.

Data collection was conducted through a triangulation of methods, namely in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with unit leaders, HR managers, and employees involved in upskilling and reskilling programs, as well as the use of digital performance systems, with the aim of obtaining their perceptions, experiences, and views on HR management practices. Participatory observation was conducted to directly observe the training process, the use of the performance management system, and day-to-day employee interactions. Documentation was used where relevant, for example, in the form of training modules, SOPs, or internal policies that support the analysis of HR management practices. This combination of methods was used to increase the validity of the findings and ensure that the data reflects the actual conditions of the organization.

Data analysis was conducted through three main stages according to the Miles & Huberman (1994) model. The first stage is data reduction, where the results of interviews, observations, and documentation are simplified and focused on the research themes, namely upskilling, reskilling, digital performance management, and AI ethics. Irrelevant data is eliminated, while patterns and relationships between findings are identified. The second stage is data presentation, where the reduced data is arranged in narrative form, tables, or diagrams to facilitate the observation of patterns and trends in HR management practices in the field. The third stage is data verification, namely drawing preliminary conclusions based on the patterns found, which are then verified through triangulation between methods and data sources to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

This design enables the research to provide a deep and contextual understanding of HR management practices in the digital and AI era. The use of method triangulation ensures that findings are not derived from a single source but are verified through multiple perspectives. The case study approach allows researchers to capture complex organizational dynamics, including the interactions between technology, management policies, and employees. Systematic data analysis through data reduction, presentation, and verification supports accurate and accountable conclusions. Thus, this methodology provides a strong foundation for answering the research questions and presents findings

relevant to the development of HR management theory and practice in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Employee Upskilling Management

In practice, upskilling is defined as the process of improving employees' existing competencies to adapt to the demands of digital-based work. This process includes mastery of internal applications, increased digital literacy, the ability to utilize work-supporting technology, and enhancing professional competencies relevant to their respective tasks. Organizations emphasize upskilling as an adaptation strategy, not simply an administrative formality, thus ensuring employees remain relevant and productive amidst digital transformation. Furthermore, upskilling is also seen as a tool to build employee confidence in using new technologies, enabling them to navigate changing work processes without feeling overwhelmed. This operational definition serves as a reference in data collection, as it emphasizes tangible competency aspects, technology implementation, and its impact on employee readiness for increasingly digital work.

Interviews with HR managers indicate that the organization provides a variety of internal and online training programs tailored to job requirements. One manager stated, "We encourage employees to participate in online training regularly to familiarize themselves with new systems, particularly internal data management and analysis software." Researchers interpreted this as the organization positioning upskilling as a strategy for direct adaptation to operational needs. This data suggests that the organization's focus is not solely on formal training, but on skills that can be directly applied in daily work. However, interviews also revealed that training implementation remains flexible, so not all employees participate with the same intensity, depending on their motivation, schedule, and task urgency.

Observations showed that some employees actively participated in training practices, utilizing internal application simulations and engaging in discussions to understand the material, while others appeared passive or simply followed along without much interaction. Researchers interpreted that participation levels were influenced by the relevance of the material to actual work, intrinsic motivation, and prior experience using technology. Overall, upskilling in this organization operates as a responsive strategy to maintain employee competency relevance. Data patterns indicate that upskilling is most effective when the training material is directly related to employees' jobs and supported by management encouragement, and provides tangible benefits in improving employee work ability and confidence.

Employee Reskilling Practices

Reskilling in the field is defined as the process of employee learning to master new skills relevant to changing roles due to automation or the use of AI. Reskilling aims to ensure employee competency when tasks and responsibilities shift, whether due to new technology or organizational restructuring. This

operational definition serves as a reference for research because it emphasizes that reskilling is not simply general training, but rather the mastery of specific skills appropriate to actual role changes. Organizations emphasize reskilling as a strategy to mitigate the risk of employee capacity loss, while also maintaining performance and productivity. Thus, reskilling is a crucial element of adaptive and sustainable human resource development, particularly in the era of rapid digital transformation.

Interviews with managers indicate that reskilling focuses on employees whose job roles have changed due to the implementation of digital systems or AI. One manager stated, "We adapt employee tasks and provide additional training so they can fill new roles created by digitalization." The researchers' interpretation suggests that organizations utilize reskilling as a strategic adaptation mechanism to maintain employee continuity. Another interview with an employee affected by job changes noted, "Learning new skills is challenging because it has to fit into my routine work, but it helps me stay in my new role." These findings confirm that reskilling requires employee mental readiness and managerial support for a successful adaptation process.

Observations indicate that reskilling is typically conducted through hands-on work experience and mentoring between employees, allowing employees to learn new skills contextually. Researchers interpret this on-the-job approach as effective in skills transfer, but the success of the process is highly dependent on guidance and supervision from superiors. Data patterns indicate that reskilling is situational and flexible, most effective when the new skills are relevant to the changing role, accompanied by intensive mentoring, and supported by employee motivation to adapt to job changes. In conclusion, reskilling is not simply a training program, but an organizational adaptation strategy that prioritizes task relevance and continuous employee capacity development.

Digital-Based Performance Management

Digital-based performance management in the field is defined as a system for monitoring, assessing, and managing employee performance using a digital platform. This system allows for the recording of work achievements, periodic evaluations, and the provision of real-time feedback. This operational definition encompasses transparency, speed of data processing, and ease of performance reporting, enabling management and employees to accurately view work achievements. This digital system is also expected to accelerate the evaluation process, provide historical performance data, and support evidence-based decision-making. Thus, digital performance management aims not only to improve administrative efficiency but also to motivate employees and ensure the effective achievement of organizational targets.

Interviews with HR managers revealed that digital systems are used to set work targets, report achievements, and conduct regular performance evaluations. One manager stated, "Digital systems make it easier for us to monitor performance and provide feedback more transparently." Researchers interpreted the use of digital systems as increasing efficiency and transparency,

but still requiring adjustments so that assessments are not only based on numbers, but also consider qualitative contributions. Interviews with employees indicated, "Sometimes the system only assesses numbers, while non-technical contributions are less visible." Researchers' interpretation confirmed that digital systems are effective in monitoring, but interpersonal assessments are still needed to capture qualitative aspects.

Observations show that employees routinely input work performance data, utilize digital dashboards, and participate in weekly reviews. However, face-to-face interaction with superiors for more in-depth evaluation remains limited. Researchers interpret that technology simplifies the monitoring process, but direct communication remains crucial to ensure constructive and humane feedback. Data patterns suggest that a combination of digital systems and interpersonal communication is more effective in performance management. Organizations that integrate the two tend to have more comprehensive and transparent performance assessments, which can increase employee motivation, compared to those that rely solely on digital systems.

Ethics of Using AI in Human Resource Management

The ethics of AI use in the field are defined as the principles, guidelines, and practices that govern the application of artificial intelligence in HR management to ensure fairness, accountability, and respect for employee rights. This operational definition encompasses aspects of algorithm transparency, personal data protection, bias prevention, and humane decision-making. AI ethics are important because technology can influence decisions related to performance appraisals, promotions, or task allocation, so the potential for unfairness must be minimized. Therefore, the use of AI is not only about efficiency and data analysis, but also related to employee integrity, trust, and acceptance of the technology.

Interviews with HR managers indicate that AI is used limitedly for performance data analysis and administration, but there are no formal guidelines regarding its ethical use. One manager stated, "AI helps with administrative work, but we are still discussing ethical guidelines for its use internally." Researchers interpreted this as organizations beginning to utilize AI as a tool, but attention to transparency, accountability, and employee protection remains limited. Employees expressed similar concerns: "Sometimes they worry that AI-based decisions are less humane and could be biased." The researchers' interpretation suggests that these concerns need to be addressed to ensure widespread acceptance of AI and prevent unfairness.

Observations indicate that AI use is limited to data analysis, administrative processing, and performance reporting. No specific outreach was found regarding the ethics of AI use among employees, and human interaction continues to dominate key decisions. Researchers interpret that while technology enhances efficiency, without ethical guidelines and outreach, AI has the potential to create uncertainty or perceptions of unfairness. Data patterns indicate that the success of AI implementation in HR depends not only on technological sophistication but also on the existence of internal regulations, transparency, and

clear communication with employees so that technology supports performance without diminishing the human touch.

Discussion

employee upskilling management in this organization emphasizes improving digital competency, mastery of internal applications, and literacy in work-supporting technologies. This finding is consistent with the literature emphasizing the importance of upskilling as an organizational response to technological change to maintain employee productivity and competitiveness (Farawowan, 2025; Sundaram, 2025). However, this study also found an important difference: the effectiveness of upskilling is influenced by individual motivation and the relevance of training materials, which have not been discussed in detail in previous literature. The theoretical implications suggest that upskilling models should consider psychological factors and the work context, not just technical training design. Practically, organizations need to design training programs that are adaptive, motivate employees, and align with operational needs so that upskilling truly improves competency and readiness for digital transformation.

reskilling practices found emphasize mastering new skills for employees experiencing role changes due to automation or AI integration. This aligns with the HR adaptation literature, which defines reskilling as a strategy to mitigate the risk of employee capacity loss and ensure competency alignment with new tasks. This research highlights the difference: reskilling in the field is often conducted through on-the-job practice and mentoring between employees, while the literature places more emphasis on formal training (Amrahi Tabieh et al., 2025; Beier et al., 2025). The theoretical implications emphasize the importance of a contextual and humanistic approach to reskilling, while practical implications suggest that organizations must provide effective mentoring and communication to enable employees to optimally adapt to changing tasks.

In terms of digital-based performance management , this study found that digital systems facilitate the recording of work achievements, monitoring, and real-time evaluation. This finding aligns with the theory that digital systems increase the efficiency and transparency of performance management (Cosa & Torelli, 2024; Wirapraja et al., 2025). However, this study points to a key difference: digital assessments tend to focus on quantitative aspects, while qualitative contributions are less exposed. Theoretically, this emphasizes the need for a balance between data-driven evaluation and interpersonal interaction in assessing performance. Practically, organizations must integrate qualitative assessments through direct communication to ensure that digital systems are not only efficient but also fair and comprehensive.

The ethics of using AI in HR management is a key finding of this study. While AI is used for administration and data analysis, ethical guidelines have not yet been formalized. This finding aligns with the literature emphasizing the importance of transparency, accountability, and bias prevention in AI implementation (Akinrinola et al., 2024; Bibi, 2024). However, this study found that employees expressed concerns about the human touch and fairness, while the literature focuses more on the technological aspects. The theoretical

implications suggest that AI implementation in HR management should be viewed as an interaction between technology and humans, not simply as a tool. Practical implications emphasize the need for internal regulation, outreach, and oversight to ensure AI supports organizational performance without compromising employee trust and fairness.

Overall, the research findings reveal a pattern of integration between upskilling, reskilling, digital performance management, and AI ethics that shape holistic HR adaptation. These findings emphasize that digital transformation is not only about implementing technology, but also involves competency development, effective communication, and attention to human aspects. From a theoretical perspective, this research extends the HR management literature by emphasizing the simultaneous interrelationships between competency, technology, and ethics in the context of organizational adaptation. Practically, organizations can leverage this pattern to design adaptive, equitable, and sustainable HR strategies, so that digital transformation simultaneously supports employee productivity and well-being.

Thus, this study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of HR management in the digital and AI era , as it demonstrates that successful technology implementation depends on a balance between training, performance evaluation, and ethical compliance. The patterns emerging from the data emphasize that employee adaptation and organizational effectiveness are only achieved when technology, policies, and the human touch are managed simultaneously. The theoretical and practical implications of this study point to an integrative HR management model, which can serve as a reference for other organizations in designing adaptive, humanistic, and ethical digital transformation strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that HR management transformation in the digital and AI era requires integration between employee competency development through upskilling and reskilling, digital-based performance management, and the application of ethics in the use of AI. The most important lesson from this study is that the success of organizational adaptation depends not only on technology, but also on attention to human factors, relevant training, effective communication, and ethical awareness. Employees supported by appropriate training, transparent performance evaluations, and clear AI ethics guidelines tend to be better prepared to face changing roles and work demands. Thus, this study provides a lesson that a holistic and adaptive HR management strategy is key to organizational success in facing the digital era, while ensuring employee well-being and productivity are maintained.

Scientifically, this study makes an important contribution by presenting empirical evidence regarding the actual practice of digital and AI-based HR management, and highlighting the interplay between technology, competency, and ethics. The paper's strengths lie in its in-depth case study approach, data triangulation, and focus on the context of employee adaptation. However, this study has limitations, including its limited scope within a single organization, requiring caution in generalizing the findings. Future research recommends

conducting comparative studies across organizations or sectors, expanding the scope to include variables such as organizational culture and employee satisfaction, and examining the long-term impact of digital transformation and AI on employee performance and career development.

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