



Digital Talent Management: Adaptive Strategies in the Era of Industry 4.0 Transformation

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Abstract. *This study explores how adaptive strategies contribute to effective digital talent management (DTM) in the context of Industry 4.0 transformation. As organizations face increasing digital disruption, strategic approaches to human resource management become essential for sustaining workforce competitiveness. Drawing on a qualitative descriptive method through systematic literature review, this research develops a conceptual framework linking adaptive strategies such as organizational flexibility, continuous learning, and hybrid work systems with successful DTM outcomes. Findings suggest that adaptive capabilities enable organizations to align their human capital with emerging technological demands, fostering innovation and long term resilience. The study provides theoretical insights into strategic HRM and dynamic capabilities, while offering practical guidance for implementing agile and digitally integrated talent systems in various industries. The implications highlight the role of learning cultures, structural reconfiguration, and remote collaboration in shaping future ready talent ecosystems in the digital era.*

Keywords: *Adaptive Strategies, Digital Talent Management, Hybrid Work, Industry 4.0, Organizational Learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital talent management (DTM) has emerged as a critical element in human resource strategies amidst the ongoing digital transformation driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0). DTM refers to a structured approach to identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining digital savvy professionals who possess technological competencies, creativity, and adaptability to rapid organizational changes (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2022; Margherita & Braccini, 2020). As organizations increasingly rely on digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and cloud computing, the demand for digital talent has become central to maintaining competitive advantage (Strohmeier & Schmid, 2021). Beyond recruitment, digital talent management focuses on continuous development and fostering a technologically integrated, flexible work environment (Bresciani et al., 2021). This positions DTM as a key driver for sustaining digital transformation within organizations operating in the Industry 4.0 landscape.

In this context, organizations are compelled to adopt innovative and adaptive strategies to remain viable in a disruptive digital environment. However, empirical evidence suggests that many firms struggle with digital integration due to limitations in managing their human capital effectively (Schiavi et al., 2022). The urgency of this study lies in addressing the gap between the pace of digital adoption and the readiness of digital talent management systems to support such transitions (Elia et al., 2020). While previous research has investigated the implementation

of digital technologies and strategic responses, there remains a paucity of studies that examine the intersection of adaptive organizational strategies and digital talent management practices. Consequently, this study seeks to fill this research gap by emphasizing the strategic human resource dimensions essential for successful digital transformation.

Adaptive strategies are organizational responses designed to navigate dynamic and uncertain environments. These strategies involve structural flexibility, organizational learning, and the ability to rapidly respond to market and technological changes (Alaassar et al., 2022). In the realm of digital talent management, adaptive strategies play a pivotal role in shaping future oriented workforce planning, developing competencies aligned with digital demands, and designing hybrid or remote working systems (Rymarczyk et al., 2023). Organizational adaptiveness in formulating and implementing digital HR strategies is thus a critical success factor in managing digital talent within complex and technology driven ecosystems.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution introduces disruptive technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, blockchain, and smart robotics, transforming traditional business models across industries (Kovács et al., 2022). This transformation not only affects operational processes but also necessitates structural and cultural changes within organizations, particularly in how they manage human resources (Zhou et al., 2020). Industry 4.0 thus provides an essential contextual backdrop that shapes how adaptive strategies influence the design and implementation of digital talent management systems. However, empirical studies that investigate this triadic relationship remain limited, underscoring the novelty and significance of this research.

This study aims to analyze the influence of adaptive strategies and the transformative effects of Industry 4.0 on digital talent management within digitally evolving organizations. Theoretically, it contributes to enriching the literature by integrating strategic management and digital HRM within the context of technological transformation. Empirically, the study offers practical insights for managers and policy-makers on how to develop agile and technology based talent management frameworks that enhance organizational competitiveness in the digital age.

Despite the growing interest in Digital Talent Management (DTM), existing studies predominantly concentrate on recruitment and technology based development while overlooking how organizational adaptive strategies critically shape the readiness and sustainability of digital talent systems in Industry 4.0. Prior research has highlighted the importance of digital competencies and the use of emerging technologies such as AI, big data, and cloud computing (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2022; Strohmeier & Schmid, 2021), but it

seldom investigates how structural flexibility, organizational learning, and agile HR practices influence digital talent outcomes. Furthermore, while some studies acknowledge the gap between digital adoption and talent readiness (Elia et al., 2020), few explore how adaptive organizational frameworks mediate this misalignment. Additionally, the interplay among adaptive strategies, contextual Industry 4.0 transformation, and DTM practices has yet to be empirically examined in an integrated framework, leaving a theoretical and practical void in understanding how firms can build resilient and future ready talent ecosystems (Alaassar et al., 2022; Schiavi et al., 2022).

This study addresses the gap by developing an integrated model that empirically investigates the triadic relationship between adaptive strategies, Industry 4.0 dynamics, and digital talent management. The novelty of this research lies in its theoretical contribution to strategic human resource literature by unifying the concepts of organizational adaptability, digital transformation, and talent systems within a single framework. Moreover, it offers practical insights by identifying key strategic levers such as hybrid working, agile structures, and digital competency development that enable firms to effectively manage talent in a disruptive digital environment. By examining these interconnections, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how adaptive HR strategies can enhance organizational competitiveness and resilience in the face of technological change.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

This study is grounded in the Resource Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which together provide a strategic lens for understanding how firms can develop and sustain competitive advantages through effective digital talent management in a rapidly evolving technological landscape. The RBV posits that human capital, especially digital savvy employees, is a valuable, rare, and inimitable resource that can drive organizational success (Barney, 1991). Meanwhile, the Dynamic Capabilities framework (Teece et al., 1997) emphasizes the need for firms to continually adapt, integrate, and reconfigure internal and external resources including talent in response to changing environments. These theoretical perspectives justify the centrality of adaptive strategies in building organizational responsiveness and agility, particularly in the face of Industry 4.0 disruptions.

Several studies have explored the link between digital transformation and HRM. Bondarouk and Brewster (2022) emphasized the shift toward digital talent ecosystems that require flexible and continuous development practices. Strohmeier and Schmid (2021) discussed the role of data driven HR tools in recruitment and workforce analytics. However,

these studies often overlook the strategic processes by which firms align their HR systems with broader organizational adaptability. Schiavi et al. (2022) noted that failure in talent readiness often stems from rigid structures and an absence of long term planning. Similarly, Alaassar et al. (2022) and Elia et al. (2020) highlighted that adaptive strategies such as agile HR and hybrid working models are essential for aligning human capital with technological change, yet empirical validation of such frameworks remains limited. Thus, this study leverages these theoretical foundations to explore how adaptive HR strategies, framed by Industry 4.0 imperatives, enable organizations to effectively attract, develop, and retain digital talent in dynamic environments.

The intersection of Industry 4.0 and human resource management introduces a new theoretical lens that integrates technological change with organizational design and workforce strategies. Industry 4.0, characterized by automation, interconnected systems, and real time data exchange, necessitates that organizations not only invest in new technologies but also cultivate a digitally competent workforce that can operate and innovate within these advanced systems (Kovács et al., 2022). This perspective is further supported by the Socio Technical Systems Theory, which posits that effective organizational performance depends on the joint optimization of social (people) and technical (systems) subsystems. In this context, digital talent becomes a strategic asset that must be continuously developed and supported through adaptive and agile HR structures.

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) theory also provides an important foundation for this study. SHRM suggests that HR practices should align with business strategies to enhance performance outcomes. In the digital era, this alignment must extend to include adaptive strategies that can respond to uncertainty and technological evolution. Margherita and Braccini (2020) emphasized the necessity for talent strategies that are not only reactive but also anticipatory, involving proactive planning, upskilling, and flexible work arrangements. However, there remains limited empirical evidence on how such strategic HR alignment specifically supports the management of digital talent in the context of Industry 4.0.

Moreover, organizational learning theory plays a critical role in shaping adaptive strategies. The ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn in response to technological and market shifts becomes essential for maintaining relevance in the digital economy. Alaassar et al. (2022) argue that organizations that embed continuous learning into their talent management systems are better positioned to handle the uncertainties of digital transformation. Adaptive HR strategies must therefore go beyond structural flexibility to foster a culture of innovation, experimentation, and knowledge sharing.

This theoretical foundation highlights the need for an integrated approach that combines the insights of RBV, Dynamic Capabilities, SHRM, and Industry 4.0 frameworks. By doing so, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature: the absence of a holistic model that explains how organizations can synchronize their adaptive strategies and technological transformations with talent management practices to build digital resilience. This synthesis of theories guides the research direction and supports the investigation of practical mechanisms by which digital talent can be effectively managed in complex, fast changing environments.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach using a literature review method as the primary analytical strategy. This approach is appropriate for exploring the conceptual linkages between organizational adaptive strategies, Industry 4.0 transformation dynamics, and digital talent management in the context of technological disruption (Snyder, 2019). The research focuses on developing a comprehensive understanding of how organizations implement adaptive human resource strategies to build resilient and sustainable digital talent systems. The object of the study is the phenomenon of digital talent management within organizations undergoing digital transformation.

Data sources are drawn from various reputable international journal articles published within the past five years (2020–2025), covering themes such as dynamic capabilities, strategic HRM, digital transformation, and talent management. A purposive sampling technique is used for literature selection, with inclusion criteria based on thematic relevance, recency, and peer reviewed status. Data analysis follows a thematic process involving coding, categorization, and narrative synthesis to identify emerging patterns and themes from the literature (Bailey, 2021). Data validity is maintained through source triangulation and consistency in coding and interpretation. This method aims to generate a conceptual framework that explains the role of adaptive strategies in managing digital talent in the Industry 4.0 era.

This research employs a qualitative descriptive methodology centered on a systematic literature review to explore the conceptual relationship between adaptive strategies, Industry 4.0 transformation, and digital talent management. The qualitative approach is considered suitable for investigating complex and evolving organizational phenomena that cannot be fully captured through quantitative metrics (Snyder, 2019). The main objective is to build an integrative understanding of how adaptive human resource strategies can effectively support digital talent development in the context of technological disruption.

The object of the study is the evolving practice of digital talent management within organizations responding to the challenges of Industry 4.0. The research particularly focuses on the strategic HR frameworks, organizational learning mechanisms, and hybrid work models that organizations deploy to attract, retain, and develop digital savvy talent. Since this phenomenon spans multiple contexts and industries, the literature review method provides a flexible yet rigorous way to synthesize insights from various empirical and conceptual studies.

The data for this study are derived from peer reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2025. These sources are selected using purposive sampling, emphasizing relevance to the themes of digital HRM, adaptive strategies, and Industry 4.0 dynamics. The inclusion criteria include topical alignment, recency, and publication in reputable academic journals. A thematic analysis approach is employed to analyze the selected literature, involving open coding, thematic categorization, and synthesis of findings across different studies (Bailey, 2021). The goal is to identify recurring patterns and generate theoretical propositions regarding the role of adaptive strategies in shaping digital talent systems.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were derived through a systematic literature review of international journal articles published between 2020 and 2025. The analysis focused on the conceptual interlinkages between adaptive organizational strategies and digital talent management (DTM) within the broader context of Industry 4.0 transformation. Results indicate that organizations succeeding in DTM implementation generally adopt adaptive strategies characterized by structural flexibility, organizational learning mechanisms, and digital work system integration. Specifically, the study identifies three core dimensions of adaptive strategies that significantly enhance digital talent outcomes: (1) continuous digital competency development through upskilling and reskilling initiatives, (2) the design of hybrid work arrangements that foster collaboration across spatial and temporal boundaries, and (3) the strategic deployment of data driven human resource management tools to inform decision making.

These findings are synthesized into a conceptual framework that captures the dynamic relationship between digital transformation, adaptive HR strategies, and DTM performance. Within this model, adaptive strategies serve as a mediating mechanism that bridges the gap between rapid technological shifts and workforce readiness. Figure 1 illustrates this integrative framework, highlighting the strategic alignment between structural flexibility, agile HR practices, and digital talent sustainability.

The discussion of these findings demonstrates a strong correlation between organizational adaptability and the strategic management of digital human capital. This aligns with the work of Alaassar et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of aligning HR strategies with technological disruptions to improve talent readiness. The study also corroborates insights from Margherita and Braccini (2020), who argue for future oriented HR strategies that proactively anticipate technological changes. However, the qualitative descriptive nature of this study introduces certain limitations, particularly concerning the generalizability of the findings across industries and geographic contexts, which may exhibit varied levels of digital maturity and strategic capability.

The practical implications of this research are highly relevant for HR policymakers and organizational leaders. Implementing flexible work policies, investing in digital skill development, and utilizing analytics driven decision making systems can significantly bolster an organization's capacity to navigate digital transformation. From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to the domains of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Dynamic Capabilities by incorporating disruptive technology and remote work dynamics as integral elements in modern talent management. Nonetheless, further empirical investigation particularly through quantitative analysis or case based research is recommended to validate the conceptual model and enhance its applicability in diverse organizational settings.

Adaptive Strategies in Digital Talent Management

The application of adaptive strategies has become a central mechanism for organizations to respond effectively to the disruptive nature of Industry 4.0. Adaptive strategies refer to the organizational capacity to restructure internal processes, implement agile practices, and respond rapidly to environmental changes, especially technological advancements. In the context of Digital Talent Management (DTM), these strategies manifest in three primary forms: structural flexibility, organizational learning, and the implementation of hybrid work systems. Structural flexibility involves redesigning organizational hierarchies and workflows to be more decentralized, facilitating quicker decision making and innovation (Schiavi et al., 2022). This approach allows for more fluid communication channels and collaborative networks that are essential for managing digital talent who thrive in dynamic work environments.

Organizational learning, as the second component, underpins adaptive capacity by encouraging continuous skill development and knowledge sharing. This is particularly crucial in digital contexts where rapid technological obsolescence necessitates ongoing upskilling (Alaassar et al., 2022). Organizations that embed learning as a core component of their culture are better positioned to cultivate resilient talent ecosystems. The third dimension hybrid work

systems responds to the evolving expectations of the digital workforce. As remote and flexible work become normative, adaptive strategies must accommodate diverse work arrangements while maintaining productivity and cohesion (Rymarczyk et al., 2023). Together, these components demonstrate that adaptive strategies are not only responses to external disruptions but proactive enablers of digital transformation, allowing organizations to attract and retain digital savvy professionals in a competitive talent market.

Industry 4.0 and Its Impact on Organizational Structures

The advent of Industry 4.0 has significantly transformed the foundations of organizational design and workforce management. Characterized by technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and big data analytics, Industry 4.0 fosters interconnected, automated, and data driven systems (Kovács et al., 2022). These technologies not only optimize operational efficiencies but also demand fundamental shifts in organizational structure. Traditional hierarchical models are increasingly replaced by flat, network based architectures that prioritize agility and cross functional collaboration. Such reconfigurations are critical for supporting digital talent, who operate best in flexible and responsive environments. The shift towards horizontal communication, decentralization, and team based work models aligns with the expectations and competencies of the new digital workforce.

Moreover, the Industry 4.0 landscape imposes a dual challenge on organizations: technological integration and human capital readiness. While firms are investing heavily in automation and digital tools, their success often hinges on the organization's ability to reconfigure its internal capabilities particularly talent structures to match this transformation (Zhou et al., 2020). This includes redefining job roles, creating interdisciplinary teams, and establishing new performance metrics that account for innovation, adaptability, and digital fluency. The integration of smart technologies has also blurred the boundaries between physical and virtual workspaces, reinforcing the need for hybrid and remote work infrastructures. These organizational changes are not merely structural but cultural, requiring a shift in mindset towards openness, experimentation, and continuous learning. Consequently, the transformation driven by Industry 4.0 is as much about people as it is about technology, underscoring the interdependence between structural innovation and digital talent management.

Organizational Learning and Digital Talent Ecosystems

Organizational learning plays a pivotal role in developing resilient digital talent ecosystems, particularly in environments influenced by rapid technological change. In the context of Industry 4.0, learning is no longer confined to formal training sessions but becomes

embedded within the organizational culture, manifesting through continuous feedback, knowledge sharing, and iterative skill development (Alaassar et al., 2022). This learning centric orientation enables organizations to remain agile, as employees are equipped to adapt their competencies in response to emerging digital demands. Moreover, organizations that foster a culture of learning are better positioned to retain top digital talent, who increasingly prioritize opportunities for professional growth and innovation over traditional job security. Learning agility defined as the capacity to quickly acquire and apply new knowledge is now a critical attribute for both individuals and organizations navigating digital transformation.

The development of digital talent ecosystems, therefore, hinges upon an organization's ability to institutionalize learning processes that are scalable, inclusive, and strategically aligned with technological trends. Ecosystems of this kind transcend the boundaries of individual firms and often involve partnerships with educational institutions, technology providers, and professional networks. Through these ecosystems, organizations can access a broader talent pool, while offering dynamic learning environments that mirror real world complexities (Margherita & Braccini, 2020). The interplay between organizational learning and ecosystem development facilitates the emergence of adaptive talent pipelines structures that not only fill current competency gaps but also anticipate future skill requirements. As a result, digital talent management evolves from a reactive function to a strategic enabler of innovation and long term competitiveness. This shift reflects a paradigmatic change in HRM, where knowledge generation and capability renewal are central to talent sustainability in the digital era.

Hybrid Work Models and Talent Engagement

The widespread adoption of hybrid work models has redefined the parameters of talent engagement and organizational performance in the digital era. These models, which combine remote and in office work arrangements, are a direct response to evolving employee expectations, advancements in communication technology, and the necessity for operational continuity amid disruptions. Hybrid work fosters flexibility, autonomy, and accessibility qualities highly valued by digital talent who often seek environments that balance personal agency with professional impact (Rymarczyk et al., 2023). Consequently, organizations that implement thoughtful and adaptive hybrid strategies are more likely to attract and retain skilled professionals, especially in competitive digital markets. However, effective hybrid work systems require more than technological infrastructure; they demand robust management practices that ensure inclusivity, accountability, and sustained engagement across distributed teams.

The engagement of digital talent in hybrid environments is also closely tied to organizational culture and leadership styles. Transparency, regular communication, and trust based management are essential to mitigate the risks of isolation and disengagement. Leaders must cultivate digital empathy and inclusive decision making to strengthen team cohesion and morale. From an HRM perspective, this involves redesigning performance evaluations, career development pathways, and incentive systems to align with hybrid dynamics. For instance, outcome based assessments and virtual mentorship programs have emerged as key mechanisms to support hybrid workers and sustain their professional growth. Furthermore, digital platforms such as collaborative software, HR analytics tools, and AI enabled feedback systems have become critical enablers in monitoring performance and fostering connection. As such, hybrid work is not merely a logistical solution but a transformative model that reshapes the future of talent engagement, demanding new capabilities from both employees and employers.

Strategic Implications for Talent Management in the Digital Era

The integration of adaptive strategies into digital talent management frameworks offers critical insights for both theoretical development and organizational practice. Theoretically, this study underscores the relevance of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory in navigating technological disruptions. SHRM emphasizes the strategic alignment between HR practices and business objectives, which in the digital era includes agility, innovation, and employee empowerment. Dynamic Capabilities Theory further contextualizes this alignment by highlighting the need for continual reconfiguration of resources particularly human capital in response to environmental changes (Teece et al., 1997). Together, these frameworks affirm that the capacity to adapt HR strategies to digital transformations is not an auxiliary function but a strategic imperative for organizational resilience. This study contributes to these bodies of knowledge by proposing a model that links adaptive mechanisms such as learning systems, structural flexibility, and hybrid work policies with talent sustainability outcomes.

From a practical standpoint, the study offers a roadmap for organizations seeking to future proof their workforce strategies. The implementation of digital learning platforms, coupled with regular reskilling and upskilling initiatives, ensures that employees remain aligned with technological developments. Additionally, fostering a culture of continuous learning and experimentation enhances organizational agility. Hybrid work arrangements must be designed to ensure both equity and efficiency, supported by data driven HR tools that enable real time decision making. Leaders play a crucial role in facilitating this transformation by modeling adaptability, promoting inclusivity, and championing innovation. These practices

collectively contribute to the creation of digital talent ecosystems interconnected networks of skilled professionals, knowledge flows, and supportive infrastructures that drive long term competitive advantage. The strategic implications are clear: talent management in the digital age must evolve beyond administrative functions to become an engine of digital transformation and organizational renewal.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that adaptive strategies are essential components in the successful implementation of digital talent management (DTM) within the context of Industry 4.0. Through a systematic review of recent literature, the research reveals that structural flexibility, organizational learning, and hybrid work models significantly influence the development and sustainability of digital talent ecosystems. These strategies enable organizations to align their human resource capabilities with rapid technological changes, enhancing their ability to attract, develop, and retain digital savvy professionals. The integrative framework developed in this study highlights the mediating role of adaptive strategies between digital transformation drivers and talent management outcomes, thereby offering both theoretical insights and practical guidance for organizations seeking to thrive in a disruptive digital environment.

Given the qualitative and literature based nature of this research, its findings are best interpreted as conceptual rather than generalizable across all industrial contexts. Future studies are encouraged to validate this framework empirically through case studies or quantitative methods across different sectors and cultural settings. Practically, organizations are advised to invest in continuous learning infrastructures, foster leadership styles that support flexibility and innovation, and implement inclusive hybrid work systems. Moreover, HR departments should leverage data driven tools to enhance decision making and monitor talent performance in real time. Addressing the limitations, this study recommends future research to explore the long term impact of adaptive strategies on digital talent retention and the role of inter organizational collaboration in developing robust digital ecosystems.

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