



Human Resource Development to Strengthen Competitiveness in the Global Digital Market Era

Dian Arisanti^{1*}, Kevin Indajang², Ayunda Fatmasari³,
Muhamad Risal Tawil⁴, Eka Kurnia Saputra⁵

¹STIA dan Manajemen Kepelabuhan Barunawati, Indonesia

²Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Sultan Agung Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

³Universitas Tjut Nyak Dhien, Indonesia

⁴Politeknik Baubau, Indonesia

⁵STIE Pembangunan Tanjungpinang, Indonesia

Corresponding Author : Dian Arisanti : dian.arisanti@stiamak.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Human resource development is a key pillar in a country's economic transformation. In today's digital and knowledge-based economy, human resources are no longer simply production factors like machines or land, but rather strategic assets that determine global competitiveness. In the digital world, competitive advantage no longer lies in the ownership of physical assets, but rather in data mastery, creativity in problem-solving, and the ability to build trust with consumers worldwide. Human involvement in the global digital market also includes a strategic role in navigating the complexities of varying cultures and regulations in each country. This study aims to provide an analysis of human resource development to strengthen competitiveness in the global digital market era. This analysis uses a qualitative approach from the perspective of a human resources expert. The research findings demonstrate Dave Ulrich and Josh Bersin's understanding that a paradigm shift in human resource management in the global digital market era is no longer merely an option, but a necessity for survival. In the global digital market, the competitiveness of a nation or company is no longer determined by the possession of natural resources, but by the quality of its human capital.

INTRODUCTION

Human resource development is a key pillar in a country's economic transformation. In today's digital and knowledge-based economy, human resources are no longer simply production factors like machines or land, but rather strategic assets that determine global competitiveness. Investment in human resources through education and technical training has a direct impact on productivity levels (Mariani et al., 2023; Pandiangan et al., 2025). A skilled workforce is able to utilize new technologies more efficiently, reduce waste, and create higher-quality output in a shorter time. A developed economy relies heavily on innovation capabilities. Human resources with high digital literacy and critical thinking skills enable the creation of new technologies or modification of existing systems to become more competitive. Without qualified human resources, a country will become merely a consumer of technology, not a producer. Human resource development facilitates the economic transition from the primary sector to the secondary and tertiary sectors. Countries with high-quality human resources tend to have strong financial services, information technology, and creative industries, which typically have significantly higher added value.

Human resource development is the process of improving the quality, capabilities, and capacities of individuals within an organization or country (Tambunan and Pandiangan, 2024). In the modern era, human resources are no longer viewed merely as a cost burden, but as human capital whose economic value can continuously increase through investment. Philosophically and practically, human resources are the manifestation of all the energy, talent, and intellectual capacity possessed by individuals within an ecosystem, whether within a company or a state. In the modern economic context, human resources are no longer viewed narrowly as operational costs or simply labor carrying out technical instructions, but rather as dynamic assets that can be developed sustainably. This concept is rooted in the understanding that machines and financial capital are static without the touch of creativity and decision-making that can only be generated by the human mind. Therefore, human resource development encompasses a very broad spectrum, from meeting basic needs such as health and nutrition, which form the foundation of productivity, to higher education that hones analytical and innovation skills. The transformation of human resources in today's economy is heavily influenced by the paradigm shift from a commodity-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. Here, an individual's value is no longer measured by physical strength, but rather by their ability to adapt to rapid technological change. This adaptation process involves what is known as lifelong learning, where individuals, both independently and through institutional facilitation, continuously improve their skills to meet the challenges of automation and artificial intelligence. When the quality of a nation's human resources improves, this automatically improves production efficiency, expands the scope of domestic innovation, and ultimately creates more inclusive economic growth and strong competitiveness in the global market.

The success of this development ultimately depends heavily on the synchronization between education and industrial needs so that human potential is not wasted but is directed towards sectors that provide the highest added value.

In a global digital market landscape that no longer recognizes geographical boundaries, human resources are transforming into a key growth engine that drives the entire digital economy ecosystem through adaptability and emotional intelligence (Gideon, 2025). The role of humans in this context has gone beyond conventional administrative tasks, where individuals are now required to bridge the gap between cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence and increasingly personalized and dynamic market needs. The quality of human resources is a key determinant of an economic entity's ability to compete on the international stage. In the digital world, competitive advantage no longer lies in the ownership of physical assets, but rather in data mastery, creativity in problem-solving, and the ability to build trust with consumers worldwide. Human involvement in the global digital market also includes a strategic role in navigating the complexities of varying cultures and regulations in each country. Superior human resources possess high digital literacy, enabling them to manage information technology infrastructure, conduct accurate data-driven market analysis, and create effective digital marketing strategies (Sastra, 2023). However, beyond technical expertise, the role of humans remains crucial in terms of ethics and empathy, where complex decision-making often requires consideration of human values that cannot be replicated by algorithms. Therefore, developing human resources that focus on high-level cognitive skills and mental flexibility is an absolute requirement for a nation's economic sustainability in the face of the ever-accelerating flow of digital globalization.

This study aims to provide an analysis of human resource development to strengthen competitiveness in the global digital market era.

RESEARCH METHOD

In the world of research and professional practice, experts view qualitative approaches not simply as the opposite of quantitative ones, but as a precise instrument for analyzing complex social realities (Kurdhi et al., 2023). If quantitative data answers the question how much, then a qualitative approach answers the question why and how (Yoppy et al., 2024). Qualitative research attempts to appreciate human complexity. This approach views individuals not as statistical data points, but as meaning-makers of the world they inhabit. The primary goal of a qualitative approach is to deeply understand social phenomena by emphasizing aspects of meaning, perception, and human experience.

To provide explanatory support with this qualitative approach, secondary data is used as a reference through books, journals, and related sources. Secondary data is data that has been collected by others for a specific purpose, and researchers reuse it for different analytical purposes (Pandiangan, 2022). In research and management, the use of secondary data is not simply a fallback option due to financial constraints, but rather a strategy to provide a strong foundation for analysis.

Although the objectives vary widely, a researcher must always ensure that the secondary data used remains relevant to the ultimate research objective, as existing data is often collected with definitions that differ from current needs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Human Resources in the Global Digital Market Era

Dave Ulrich and Josh Bersin's understanding that a paradigm shift in human resource management in the global digital market era is no longer merely an option, but a necessity for survival. A paradigm shift in human resource management in the global digital market era is no longer merely an option, but a necessity for survival. Several global experts and think tanks have provided in-depth insights into how human resources must evolve in the global digital market. Central to their insights is the transition from an administrative workforce to a technology-based strategic workforce. Here are expert perspectives on human resources in the digital era:

1. Human Resources from the Outside in

Dave Ulrich, often called the Father of Modern Human Resources, emphasizes that human resources in the digital era should not only focus on internal company processes (Ulrich and Lake, 1991).

a. Business Value

Human resources must understand global market trends and digital customer expectations.

b. Digital Leadership

Human resources leaders must be able to use technology to create an innovative work culture, not just digitize physical documents.

2. A Limitless Employee Ecosystem

Josh Bersin, a renowned global human resources analyst, highlights the shift toward the organization as an ecosystem (Bersin, 2004).

a. The Death of Traditional Hierarchy

In the digital marketplace, organizations are moving toward a more fluid team network structure.

b. Employee Experience

In the digital era, competition for global talent is fierce. Experts emphasize that companies must treat employees like customers by providing sophisticated and flexible work platforms.

Competition is no longer limited by geographic boundaries, but rather by the extent to which human resources can adapt to technology and rapid market dynamics. The following are the main pillars of human resource transformation in the digital era:

Shifting Competencies from Technical to Adaptive

In the global marketplace, technical skills have a shorter shelf life due to automation. The focus now shifts to:

a. Digital Literacy

Not just the ability to use software, but also an understanding of data ecosystems, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity.

b. Emotional Intelligence

In a world full of algorithms, the ability to empathize, negotiate, and lead cross-cultural teams is the key differentiator between humans and machines.

c. High-Level Cognitive Skills

Critical thinking, creativity, and complex problem-solving skills.

Flexible Work Structures

The digital marketplace enables remote and hybrid work models. This creates a new phenomenon:

a. Unlimited Talent

Companies can recruit experts from anywhere in the world without the need for physical relocation.

b. Gig Economy

The increasing number of freelancers who are managed based on projects, rather than conventional working hours.

CONCLUSION

The research findings demonstrate Dave Ulrich and Josh Bersin's understanding that a paradigm shift in human resource management in the global digital market era is no longer merely an option, but a necessity for survival. In the global digital market, the competitiveness of a nation or company is no longer determined by the possession of natural resources, but by the quality of its human capital.

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