

Digital transformation and human talent management: a systematic review of scientific evidence (2020–2024)

Transformación digital y gestión del talento humano: revisión sistemática de evidencia científica 2020–2024

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Abstract

In recent years, digital transformation has reconfigured management and business operation models, generating structural changes in companies worldwide. In this context, the present study aimed to systematically analyze the scientific literature published between 2020 and 2024 to understand how digital transformation impacts human talent management in companies. A systematic review methodology based on the PRISMA statement was employed, searching the Scopus database using a carefully designed Boolean strategy. After applying clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, 25 articles were selected that met the standards of scientific rigor and thematic relevance. The results show that companies that manage to articulate digital transformation strategies with human talent management practices have higher levels of productivity, adaptability and sustainability. Elements such as the development of digital competencies, the digitization of recruitment processes, and the incorporation of collaborative technologies are decisive factors for the success of these organizations. The studies also highlight persistent barriers such as poor management training in digital leadership and cultural resistance to technological change. In conclusion, digital transformation in companies cannot be understood only as a technological change, but as an integral process that requires rethinking the strategic role of human capital. This review provides relevant evidence for the design of public policies, training programs and business strategies that seek to close the digital divide in the most vulnerable segment of the Latin American business fabric.

Keywords: digital transformation, human talent management, organizational innovation.

Resumen

En los últimos años, la transformación digital ha reconfigurado los modelos de gestión y operación empresarial, generando cambios estructurales en las empresas a nivel mundial. En este contexto, el presente estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar sistemáticamente la literatura científica publicada entre 2020 y 2024 para comprender cómo la transformación digital impacta la gestión del talento humano en las empresas. Se empleó una metodología de revisión sistemática basada en la declaración PRISMA, realizando la búsqueda en la base de datos Scopus mediante una estrategia booleana cuidadosamente diseñada. Tras aplicar criterios de inclusión y exclusión claramente definidos, se seleccionaron 25 artículos que cumplían con los estándares de rigor científico y relevancia temática. Los resultados evidencian que las empresas que logran articular estrategias de transformación digital con prácticas de gestión del talento humano presentan mayores niveles de productividad, adaptabilidad y sostenibilidad. Elementos como el desarrollo de competencias digitales, la digitalización de procesos de reclutamiento, y la incorporación de tecnologías colaborativas son factores decisivos para el éxito de estas organizaciones. Los estudios también destacan barreras persistentes como la escasa formación directiva en liderazgo digital y la resistencia cultural al cambio tecnológico. En conclusión, la transformación digital en las empresas no puede entenderse solo como un cambio tecnológico, sino como un proceso integral que requiere repensar el rol estratégico del capital humano. Esta revisión aporta evidencia relevante para el diseño de políticas públicas, programas de formación y estrategias empresariales que busquen cerrar la brecha digital en el segmento más vulnerable del tejido empresarial latinoamericano.

Palabras clave: transformación digital, gestión del talento humano, innovación organizacional.

Introduction

Digital transformation has ceased to be a trend and has solidified into a structural necessity that reconfigures organizational logics, work schemes, and talent management within organizations. This transition has been driven both by the urgency to adapt to a global, technology-driven ecosystem and by the implementation of public policies aimed at reducing the digital divide (Espinoza-Fernández & Jara, 2023; Salazar et al., 2023). However, the process is not limited to the acquisition of technologies; it involves profound transformations in leadership models, organizational culture, and the conception of labor competencies (Burnes, 2020).

In this context, human talent management emerges as a fundamental axis for facilitating digital change. According to Dini et al. (2021), achieving effective integration between technology and people requires rethinking the functions of human capital, promoting organizational learning, continuous innovation, and the development of adaptive digital competencies. Organizations that prioritize these strategies achieve greater resilience, productivity, and sustainability (López & Martínez, 2021; Martínez-Peláez et al., 2023). Transformational leadership and agile work methodologies are presented as necessary conditions to mobilize internal commitment toward shared digital objectives (Rezaei & França Marques, 2021).

Empirical evidence indicates that many organizations have begun to incorporate digital tools into human management processes in response to the crisis triggered by COVID-19. However, their use has been uneven and fragmented, particularly in contexts with low levels of formalization (Vásquez et al., 2023). In this regard, it is urgent to redesign the processes of selection, training, evaluation, and retention of talent, considering not only technical criteria but also emotional, collaborative, and cultural factors (Ramírez & Castañeda, 2022; Muñoz-Maya et al., 2022).

Furthermore, authors such as Aybar and Baldoceca (2023) and García and Pacheco (2023) emphasize that human talent management in digital environments requires a more strategic approach, where the human resources area transitions from being merely operational to assuming a role as a facilitator of organizational change. This implies generating an organizational climate conducive to innovation, incorporating tools such as e-HRM, and fostering a results-oriented culture in collaborative and hybrid contexts (Bravo et al., 2023; Ruiz-Cantisani, 2021).

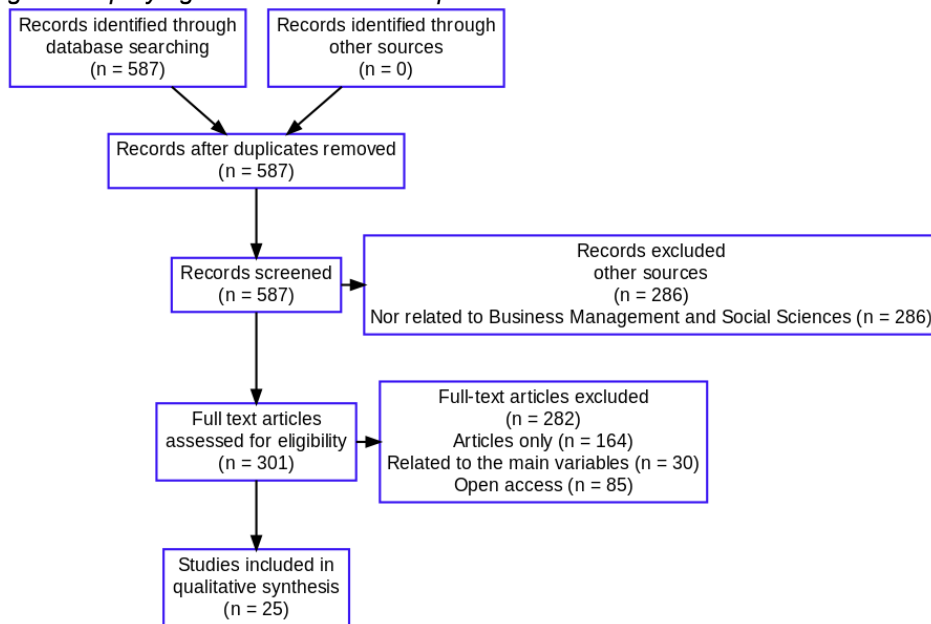
Given the dynamism of the environment and the diversity of approaches found in the literature, conducting a systematic review is fully justified to consolidate findings, identify thematic gaps, and provide a robust empirical basis for the formulation of policies and organizational strategies. Therefore, this research aims to address the following question: What scientific evidence exists regarding the impact of digital transformation on human talent management in companies between 2020 and 2024? To this end, the objective is to systematically analyze the scientific literature published between 2020 and 2024 on this topic, utilizing studies indexed in databases such as Scopus.

Methodology

This research is framed within a qualitative approach, adopting a systematic review design based on the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) statement. The methodological objective was to identify and synthesize recent scientific evidence on the relationship between digital transformation and human talent management in business contexts, prioritizing open-access studies published between 2021 and 2024 in the fields of social sciences and business management.

In the search for these articles, Boolean operators were used as algorithms, including, “or”, “and”, “not” and the search equation in Scopus was as follows: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("digital transformation") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("talent management" OR "human talent" OR "human resource management")) AND PUBYEAR > 2019 AND PUBYEAR < 2025.

Figure 1
PRISMA flow diagram displaying the article selection process



Note: Content generated from <https://hollyhartman.shinyapps.io/PRISMAFlowDiagram/>

The search strategy was executed exclusively in specialized scientific databases, particularly Scopus, using Boolean combinations such as: "digital transformation" AND "human talent management", "e-HRM" AND "business", among other variations. This initial process yielded a total of 587 records, with 0 additional articles identified from external sources, confirming the robustness of the search engine used. After deduplication, the screening of the 587 unique documents proceeded.

Table 1
Inclusion and exclusion criteria

| Criterion | Inclusion | Exclusion |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Document type | Full-text scientific articles | Abstracts, editorials, conference papers, books, or informational notes |
| Text accessibility | Open access publications | Restricted articles or those without free availability |
| Language | English and Spanish | Other untranslated languages |
| Thematic area | Social sciences, management, business administration | Engineering, health, or other unrelated areas |
| Thematic focus | Studies on digital transformation and human talent | Studies not linked to the core variables |
| Publication year | Between 2021 and 2024 | Publications prior to 2021 |
| Quality and visibility | Indexed in Scopus and peer-reviewed | Not indexed or without scientific review |

During the screening phase, 286 articles were excluded for not being related to the areas of interest (business management or social sciences), leaving 301 full articles for eligibility evaluation. Subsequently, rigorous exclusion criteria were applied: 164 articles were discarded for being abstracts or incomplete documents, 30 studies for not directly addressing the main variables (digital transformation and human talent), and 85 for lacking open access, in accordance with ethical standards of transparency and reproducibility. Ultimately, 25 scientific studies that met all inclusion criteria were selected for in-depth analysis and qualitative synthesis.

This procedure ensures the traceability and consistency of the documentary corpus, allowing for the construction of a solid empirical basis for the discussion of results. Additionally, the application of the PRISMA

diagram as a methodological tool reinforces the transparency of the review process, contributing to the academic validity of the study.

Once the articles were selected for analysis, they were read in full by the principal investigators. They convened several times to discuss and analyze each selected article. To maintain organization and clarity, an Excel tool was used to create a database and an analysis table that documented all selected articles. This allowed researchers to validate, interpret, and extract all relevant information from each study to address the research objective.

During the search, publications about companies or small businesses were considered in English, with a scientific basis regarding the relationship between digital transformation and human talent management as inclusion criteria, without prioritizing theoretical models or techniques used. Similarly, only quantitative, qualitative, and/or non-experimental level articles that explicitly stated the techniques and instruments applied within the timeframe from 2020 to 2024 were included. Each article was evaluated based on criteria such as clarity of objectives, appropriateness of methodological design, validity of results, and relevance to the research problem.

Results and discussion

Through the systematic review search, 25 articles have been identified, which are listed in Table 1. These studies belong to the Scopus database and span the years 2020 to 2024.

The main findings reveal that digital transformation, when managed strategically, contributes to enhancing the productivity, sustainability, and resilience of companies. The adoption of technologies such as big data and collaborative platforms enables the optimization of organizational decisions, provided these are accompanied by proactive leadership, digital training processes, and structures that favor innovation. However, structural challenges are also evident, linked to resource scarcity, resistance to change, and the lack of organizational policies aimed at the professionalization of talent.

Table 2

Operationalization of variables, dimensions, and thematic categories

| Variable | Dimension | Indicators (Thematic Categories) | Related Author(s) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Digital transformation | Organizational Technological Adoption | Industry 4.0, process digitization, IoT incorporation | Al-Swidi et al. (2023), Iqbal et al. (2022) |
| | Digital Competencies | Digital literacy, technological skills, continuous training | García-Sánchez et al. (2022), Jain & Sharma (2021) |
| | Digital Tools for HR | E-HRM, artificial intelligence, HR automation | Zhang et al. (2021) |
| | Digital Innovation | Digital business models, sustainability, digital Kaizen | Ahmad et al. (2020), Elia et al. (2020) |
| | Leadership in Digital Environments | Change management, transformational leadership, digital culture | de Lucas Ancillo et al. (2020), Khan & Vorley (2020), Böhmer & Schinnenburg (2023), Matarazzo et al. (2022), Sartori et al. (2021) |
| Human Talent Management | Development of Human Capacities | Upskilling, reskilling, organizational learning | Eger & Žižka (2024), Bondarouk et al. (2017) |
| | Recruitment and Retention of Talent | Digital talent acquisition, strategic selection, employer branding | Nguyen et al. (2024), Benitez et al. (2022) |
| | Job Performance and Innovation | Productivity, innovation, sustainable performance | Oliveira & Martins (2021), Bresciani et al. (2021) |
| | Work-Life Balance and Well-Being | Work-life balance, emotional health, flexible work | Susanti et al. (2022), Gupta & Sahu (2022) |
| | Sustainability and Organizational Agility | Competitive advantage, resilience, adaptability to change | Kraus et al. (2022), Margherita & Braccini (2021), |

Digital transformation constitutes a strategic process that goes beyond mere technological implementation, as it involves a comprehensive redefinition of operations, structures, and organizational culture. One of its key dimensions is organizational technological adoption, which manifests in the incorporation of emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), intelligent automation, and cyber-physical systems—fundamental for transitioning to Industry 4.0 business environments (Eger & Žižka, 2024; Aminudin et al., 2024). This dimension enables organizations to respond more agilely to environmental demands, improving their levels of efficiency and competitiveness.

Another critical dimension is the development of digital competencies, understood as the set of technical and cognitive skills necessary to operate in digitized contexts. Organizations that promote digital literacy among their employees achieve greater adaptability and resilience in the face of technological changes (Cetindamar et al., 2024). These competencies range from basic digital tool handling to mastery of advanced data analysis systems, which is vital for aligning human capital with organizational innovation and productivity objectives (Espina-Romero et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the impact of digital tools aimed at human talent management must be considered. Platforms such as digital human resource management systems (E-HRM) and the use of artificial intelligence in processes like recruitment, performance evaluation, and training have radically transformed personnel administration (Escribá-Carda et al., 2024; Zavyalova et al., 2022). These solutions, combined with digital leadership approaches focused on change management and fostering an innovative culture, create an organizational environment conducive to sustainable growth in the digital age (Klein et al., 2024). Talent management has transitioned from an operational function to a strategic pillar of business development. In this transformation, the dimension of human capacity development stands out, focusing on designing continuous training programs, reskilling, and upskilling, which enable personnel to stay updated on critical competencies for innovation (Lou et al., 2024; Sharma & Kohli, 2023). This perspective recognizes that employees' knowledge and skills are dynamic assets that require constant strengthening in highly changing contexts.

A second relevant dimension is the recruitment and retention of talent, especially in sectors where the demand for digital professionals exceeds the available supply. Organizations that implement employer branding strategies, along with digitized and personalized selection processes, are able to attract highly competitive profiles that align with their values (Gilch & Sieweke, 2021). This ability to attract and retain talent not only contributes to organizational performance but also serves as a key differentiator in globalized markets (Montero Guerra et al., 2023).

Finally, the management of job performance and the promotion of sustainable work environments are crucial dimensions for consolidating talent within organizations. The current approach combines traditional productivity indicators with criteria for innovation, emotional well-being, and work-life balance (Bajraliu & Qorraj, 2023; Awad et al., 2024). Additionally, the importance of building agile structures is recognized, where organizational resilience and the ability to adapt to uncertainty become decisive factors for ensuring business continuity and success during times of digital transformation (Purwanto et al., 2023).

The results of this systematic review affirm that digital transformation has emerged as a key process in the evolution of companies in Latin America and international contexts, affecting not only their operational and commercial processes but also the way they manage human talent. The evidence collected reveals that digitalization in these companies goes beyond the adoption of technologies; it involves a reconfiguration of competencies, leadership models, and organizational learning practices (García & Pacheco, 2023).

The findings indicate a significant convergence between digital transformation strategies and human talent management in business contexts. Various authors agree that the success of organizational digitalization processes largely depends on the preparation and attitude of the personnel toward change (Klein et al., 2024; Cetindamar et al., 2024). This link is intensified in companies that adopt advanced technological tools such as E-HRM (Escribá-Carda et al., 2024; Zavyalova et al., 2022), which automate processes without displacing the need for strategic human skills. Thus, talent not only adapts to the digital realm but also emerges as a catalyst for business innovation, validating the hypothesis that digitalization does not replace human capital but transforms it into a more critical resource.

Additionally, robust trends point to the strengthening of digital competencies as a *sine qua non* condition for achieving organizational agility and sustainability in highly competitive sectors, such as technology and manufacturing SMEs (Wang et al., 2024; Aminudin et al., 2024). The reviewed studies also indicate that organizational leadership plays a crucial role in ensuring that digital transformation is perceived not as a

technological imposition but as a shared and legitimate process (Liu et al., 2024; Fernandez-Vidal et al., 2022). This type of leadership drives not only the acquisition of digital infrastructure but also a reconfiguration of the organizational climate focused on resilience, continuous learning, and interdepartmental collaboration.

Finally, there is a strong correlation between digital transformation and companies' ability to attract, develop, and retain competitive talent in a globalized market. Research by Gilch & Sieweke (2021), Montero Guerra et al. (2023), and Sharma & Kohli (2023) emphasizes that the digitalization of the recruitment process not only enhances efficiency but also allows for the identification of profiles with high innovation potential. Concurrently, authors such as Böhmer & Schinnenburg (2023) and Bajraliu & Qorraj (2023) caution about the need to incorporate dimensions of labor well-being and personal balance to avoid the negative effects of digital stress. Thus, the new business paradigm demands a synergy between technology and humanity, where digital talent is both competent and emotionally supported by an organization that understands the complexity of transformation.

Conclusions

This systematic review critically analyzed the scientific evidence published between 2020 and 2024 regarding the impact of digital transformation on human talent management in micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in Latin America. Through the rigorous selection of six articles indexed in the Scopus database, it was confirmed that digitalization has generated a profound organizational change process that reconfigures not only operational processes but also mechanisms of leadership, learning, decision-making, and the development of human capital competencies.

This article contributes to scientific literature by systematizing an emerging and underexplored field of study in the Latin American context, particularly concerning enterprises. At the same time, it adds value to organizational stakeholders and policymakers by providing evidence of the need to integrate human talent management as a central component in digital transformation processes. The convergence between technology and human capital is not optional but essential for the sustainability of small production units in an increasingly digitalized environment.

For organizational practice, it is recommended to design digital training strategies tailored to the realities of MSEs, considering educational levels, available resources, and the specific labor dynamics of this sector. Training should focus not only on technical tools but also on soft skills for virtual and collaborative environments. Furthermore, it is suggested to promote transformational and adaptive leadership, fostering managerial profiles capable of driving a culture of change, enhancing employee motivation, and leading technological innovation processes from a participatory perspective. Additionally, it is proposed to strengthen knowledge management through digital tools that allow for documenting, sharing, and reusing organizational learnings, favoring continuous improvement processes.

For future research, it is recommended to study the impact of public policies on digital transformation in internal talent management, to assess their effectiveness and identify replicable best practices, and to develop longitudinal studies that measure the sustained effects of digitalization on organizational culture, employee productivity, and talent retention.

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