Re-architecting global talent strategies in the age of ai and digital globalisation: Implications for skills, work design, and hr value creation in emerging economies

Evangelia Fragouli
Kingston University, London, UK

Keywords
AI, globalisation, global, talent, ecosystems

Abstract

The rapid convergence of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital globalisation is profoundly transforming how organisations design work, manage talent, and generate value across borders. This study explores how global talent strategies are being re-architected in the context of emerging economies, where digital acceleration is reshaping competitive advantage and workforce capability. Drawing upon qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with HR leaders and policy experts in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, the research investigates how digital globalisation and AI integration are influencing strategic HRM practices, skill formation, and organisational capability development. The methodological approach is interpretivist, focusing on meaning-making within global and institutional contexts. The study identifies two central findings: first, that AI-driven work design and talent analytics are creating hybrid, skill-fluid ecosystems where traditional hierarchical roles are giving way to project-based global teams; and second, that HR professionals in emerging economies are constrained by infrastructural, educational, and policy barriers that limit their capacity to leverage digital talent strategies. The research contributes to global HRM theory by proposing an integrative model of AI-enabled global talent strategy that aligns digital capability building, inclusive workforce development, and HR's strategic value creation role. The findings have important implications for policymakers and HR leaders seeking to balance automation and employability, address digital skill inequities, and sustain talent competitiveness in rapidly transforming economies.

Introduction

Background of the Study

The acceleration of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital globalisation has reshaped the global talent landscape in ways unprecedented since the industrial revolution. As digital technologies dismantle traditional geographical and organisational boundaries, global labour markets are increasingly defined by mobility, connectivity, and algorithmic intelligence (Bahl et al., 2023). Organisations now compete not only for talent within physical borders but also for digital capability across virtual ecosystems that transcend national boundaries (Collings et al., 2021). This transformation has redefined the purpose and scope of human resource management (HRM), demanding a re-conceptualisation of how talent is identified, developed, and retained within a digitally interconnected world.

The forces of digital globalisation have accelerated the rise of global talent platforms, remote work ecosystems, and AI-enabled workforce analytics (Manea and Virlanuta, 2020). According to the World Economic Forum (2023), over 40% of global employers are redesigning their talent strategies to integrate AI and data-driven decision-making. These shifts have generated new opportunities for organisations in emerging economies—where young, tech-adaptive populations and expanding digital infrastructures offer potential for global competitiveness (ILO, 2022). However, they also pose significant challenges, including skill mismatches, technological inequality, and policy fragmentation (Oosthuizen and Dachs, 2021).

In many emerging markets, the intersection of AI and HRM raises a paradox: while AI promises greater efficiency and talent intelligence, the readiness of HR systems to absorb such technologies remains uneven (Budhwar et al., 2022). This disparity has led to the emergence of dual labour markets—one digitally empowered and globally integrated, the other excluded by technological and institutional barriers (Khanna

and Palepu, 2020). As AI becomes embedded in HR functions—from recruitment algorithms to predictive workforce planning—it transforms not only processes but also power relations, organisational design, and employee value propositions (Marler and Fisher, 2019).

The Value and Relevance of the Study

This study addresses a crucial gap in the literature by focusing on how global talent strategies are being re-architected in emerging economies through the dual forces of AI and digital globalisation. Existing research has predominantly centred on advanced economies, where HR digital transformation has benefited from established infrastructures and mature policy environments (Lacity and Willcocks, 2021). By contrast, emerging economies—particularly in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East—face unique contextual challenges in aligning digital innovation with workforce capability development (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2023).

The global shift toward digitalisation has intensified demand for new forms of talent agility and reskilling, requiring HR professionals to act as architects of capability ecosystems rather than administrators of employment relations (Ulrich and Dulebohn, 2018). Scholars such as Sparrow et al. (2022) argue that global HRM must now transcend operational boundaries to integrate sustainability, inclusivity, and technological adaptability. Moreover, AI-driven talent systems are changing the very nature of global competitiveness, where nations are ranked not merely by natural resources but by their "human capital intelligence"—the ability to combine data, skills, and innovation for economic growth (World Bank, 2022).

For emerging economies, the implications are profound. While digital globalisation allows access to international markets and remote talent pools, it also exposes structural weaknesses such as insufficient digital infrastructure, inadequate education systems, and limited policy coherence (Farndale et al., 2021). These weaknesses risk marginalising local talent in global value chains unless strategic HR interventions are implemented. Hence, understanding how HR leaders in these contexts are redesigning talent strategies becomes essential for shaping equitable participation in the global digital economy.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the evolving discourse on strategic HRM and institutional theory by exploring how contextual forces influence talent strategy adaptation (Paauwe and Farndale, 2017). It extends the literature on global talent management (Collings et al., 2019) by introducing the concept of AI-enabled global talent strategy—a dynamic framework integrating human and technological capabilities to enhance organisational and national competitiveness. From a practical viewpoint, the study offers insights for HR leaders and policymakers seeking to design talent ecosystems that align AI innovation with inclusive workforce development.

Conceptual Context and Emerging Trends

Digital globalisation has redefined the flow of knowledge, talent, and value creation. Unlike the earlier phase of economic globalisation, which emphasised physical production and trade, digital globalisation is driven by data flows, virtual services, and algorithmic management (Lund et al., 2019). As organisations deploy AI to automate cognitive tasks and manage distributed teams, new models of global work design are emerging—characterised by decentralised teams, gig-based expertise, and fluid career boundaries (Petriglieri et al., 2019).

For HRM, these transformations require a rethinking of strategic functions such as workforce planning, skills forecasting, and leadership development (Vrontis et al., 2022). AI enhances predictive analytics for recruitment and performance but also raises ethical concerns about transparency, bias, and human oversight (Meijerink et al., 2021). In emerging economies, these issues are compounded by data scarcity and the uneven diffusion of technology, making contextual adaptation critical.

Moreover, global labour competition is intensifying through digital outsourcing and platform work, challenging traditional notions of employment stability and HR governance (Fleming, 2021). In such environments, HR must evolve from a compliance-oriented function into a strategic capability builder, enabling organisations to integrate automation with human ingenuity. The interplay between AI, digital globalisation, and institutional contexts thus defines the new frontier of HR strategy—one that demands not only technical but also ethical and cultural intelligence.

Research Questions

Based on the above conceptual and contextual background, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How is digital globalisation and AI adoption influencing talent acquisition, development, and retention strategies in emerging economies?
2. What new skills, organisational capabilities, and HR competencies are required to sustain competitive people strategies in AI-enabled global labour markets?
3. What barriers and enablers affect the transformation of HRM practices in emerging economies in the context of AI and global talent mobility?

Research Objectives

To address these questions, the study pursues the following objectives:

1. To analyse how AI and digital globalisation are reshaping the strategic architecture of talent management in emerging economies.
2. To identify the emerging skill sets and HR capabilities necessary for sustaining competitiveness in digitally integrated global markets.
3. To examine institutional, policy, and infrastructural factors influencing the adoption of AI-enabled HR practices.
4. To propose an integrative framework for AI-enabled global talent strategy that enhances inclusive workforce participation and HR value creation.

Methodology

Research Design and Philosophical Approach

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretivist research design to explore how AI and digital globalisation are reshaping talent strategies within the specific institutional and socio-economic contexts of emerging economies. The interpretivist paradigm is appropriate because it allows for the exploration of meanings, perceptions, and contextual dynamics shaping HR practices (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Unlike positivist research, which seeks generalisable laws, interpretivism values subjectivity and complexity, recognising that HR leaders interpret AI and globalisation differently based on institutional and cultural realities (Saunders et al., 2019).

The study's focus on how and why HR strategies evolve in response to technological and global pressures aligns with a constructivist epistemology, where reality is co-constructed through social interactions and organisational experiences (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). This approach allows deep insights into decision-making, organisational learning, and capability building processes that cannot be captured through quantitative measurement alone.

Given the rapid transformation of global HR ecosystems, a qualitative inquiry provides the flexibility to identify emerging themes and link them to theoretical constructs in global talent management, institutional theory, and strategic HRM. The design also supports the development of a conceptual framework reflecting both cross-national diversity and shared patterns of adaptation.

Rationale for Methodological Choice

The rationale for choosing a qualitative methodology stems from the exploratory nature of the research questions. Previous HRM studies on AI adoption have often relied on quantitative surveys that measure technological readiness or automation impact (e.g., Marler and Fisher, 2019; Strohmeier, 2022). However, such approaches risk overlooking the contextual and behavioural nuances of HR adaptation, particularly in emerging economies where organisational and policy ecosystems vary significantly (Budhwar et al., 2022).

A qualitative design enables an understanding of processes—how HR leaders conceptualise digital transformation, how they manage resistance, and how they build digital capabilities. It also captures the strategic intent behind AI-enabled HRM, such as enhancing inclusivity or strengthening employability, which cannot be fully understood through numerical data (Eisenhardt, 2021). Moreover, the interpretivist

stance allows for triangulation of perspectives between organisational leaders, policy actors, and academic experts, enriching the study's analytical depth.

Data Collection Strategy

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with senior HR leaders, government officials, and HR technology experts from three key emerging economic regions: Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. These regions were selected for their distinctive digital development trajectories and growing engagement in global digital value chains (ILO, 2022). The participants were chosen using purposive sampling, focusing on individuals with strategic decision-making roles in talent management or digital HR transformation.

A total of 24 participants were interviewed between January and April 2025. This included:

- 10 HR Directors and Talent Strategists from multinational and regional organisations
- 8 Policy and Skills Development Officials from labour ministries and economic councils
- 6 HR technology consultants or digital transformation experts

Each interview lasted approximately 60–75 minutes and was conducted virtually via encrypted platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, to accommodate cross-border accessibility. The semi-structured format allowed for consistency across interviews while enabling participants to elaborate on experiences and contextual factors (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015).

An interview protocol guided discussions around four core themes:

- Perceived impact of AI and digital globalisation on talent management practices
- Emerging HR competencies and workforce skills
- Institutional enablers and barriers to digital HR transformation
- Strategic outlook for future HR value creation

To complement primary data, documentary analysis was conducted using national HR policy papers, international labour reports, and corporate sustainability documents. These materials provided contextual grounding and helped validate themes emerging from interviews.

Data Analysis Procedures

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded manually using a thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The analysis proceeded through five iterative stages: (1) familiarisation with data, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) identification of patterns and clusters, (4) thematic refinement, and (5) synthesis of findings into conceptual categories.

Coding was both deductive and inductive. Deductive coding drew from established frameworks in global talent management (Collings et al., 2019) and digital HR transformation (Vrontis et al., 2022), while inductive coding allowed new insights to emerge from the data itself. NVivo qualitative software supported the organisation and retrieval of codes, though final interpretation was guided by manual analysis to ensure conceptual coherence.

Themes were further cross-validated through peer debriefing with two independent HR academics familiar with international HRM research. This step enhanced the credibility and confirmability of the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). A final conceptual map was constructed to illustrate the interrelationship between AI adoption, talent strategy transformation, and HR value creation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained through the researcher's institutional ethics committee. All participants were informed about the study's objectives, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation rights. Data were anonymised, and no organisational identifiers were used. Participants were provided with summaries of the findings to ensure transparency and alignment with the principles of ethical research (Bryman, 2016).

Limitations of the Study

While qualitative inquiry offers depth of insight, it has inherent limitations regarding generalisability. The study's reliance on purposive sampling means findings represent contextually rich but non-representative perspectives. The use of virtual interviews, while practical for global participants, may have limited the observation of non-verbal cues (Opdenakker, 2006).

Additionally, as AI adoption and digital globalisation are rapidly evolving, the data represent a snapshot of a transitional period rather than a stable state. Future research employing longitudinal or comparative mixed-method approaches could provide broader empirical validation. Nonetheless, the chosen design offers a theoretically and contextually grounded understanding of how HR leaders interpret and respond to the dual forces of AI and globalisation in shaping future talent strategies.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundations of Talent Management

Talent Management (TM) has emerged as one of the most strategically significant domains within human resource management (HRM), bridging organisational performance, global competitiveness, and workforce sustainability. The concept gained prominence in the late 1990s with McKinsey & Company's "War for Talent" report (Chambers et al., 1998), which posited that talent — defined as high-performing and high-potential individuals — represented the most critical source of organisational value. Since then, TM has evolved through multiple theoretical lenses, ranging from human capital theory and the resource-based view (RBV) to social exchange theory and institutional theory.

From a human capital perspective, talent is an investment yielding future organisational returns through innovation and productivity (Becker, 1964; Lepak and Snell, 1999). The RBV (Barney, 1991) extends this by positioning talent as a strategic resource that is valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). Accordingly, TM practices such as succession planning, development programmes, and knowledge retention serve to build sustained competitive advantage. Yet, as Wright, Coff and Moliterno (2014) argue, human capital only yields such advantages when effectively organised and leveraged within complementary systems — leading to the notion of strategic alignment in TM.

A parallel school of thought, rooted in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), views TM as a reciprocal process that enhances employee engagement and organisational commitment. Employees invest discretionary effort when they perceive fairness, recognition, and development opportunities — outcomes closely tied to TM practices (Sonnenberg, van Zijderveld and Brinks, 2014). However, this relational dimension of TM has been overshadowed in many organisations by a managerialist discourse focused on performance maximisation rather than mutual growth (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

In recent years, institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2014) has also been applied to explain cross-national variations in TM. This framework suggests that organisational practices are influenced not only by internal strategies but also by institutional pressures — regulatory, normative, and cognitive. Thus, TM in emerging economies is often shaped by contextual factors such as labour market institutions, educational systems, and national cultures (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2023). This institutional lens is crucial for understanding how AI and globalisation influence TM differently across economies, as it highlights the adaptive interplay between global best practices and local realities.

Overall, these frameworks reveal TM as both a strategic and social construct — a system of practices for attracting, developing, and retaining people whose capabilities align with organisational and national value creation. However, as globalisation and digitalisation intensify, the adequacy of these traditional models is being challenged.

Contemporary Challenges in Talent Management

The landscape of TM today is defined by complexity, volatility, and systemic change. Scholars and practitioners alike acknowledge that the conventional notion of a stable, high-potential workforce is no longer viable in a globalised, technology-driven environment (Collings, Mellahi and Cascio, 2019).

Global competition for talent remains one of the most pressing challenges. Rapid economic integration and technological advancement have intensified mobility and demand for high-skilled labour, especially in digital and analytical domains (Sparrow et al., 2022). Yet, the global talent pool remains unevenly

distributed: while advanced economies attract specialised professionals, many emerging economies experience persistent skill shortages and brain drain (ILO, 2022). This asymmetry deepens the inequality between knowledge economies and developing regions, impeding inclusive growth.

Workforce demographics pose an additional challenge. Organisations must navigate multigenerational workforces, increasing diversity, and evolving expectations around flexibility and purpose (Ulrich and Dulebohn, 2018). The rise of hybrid and remote work following the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted traditional HR paradigms, compelling TM systems to integrate wellbeing, inclusivity, and digital readiness (Caligiuri, De Cieri and Minbaeva, 2020).

Technological disruption — particularly through AI and automation — has redefined the boundaries of work. Routine and operational roles are increasingly automated, while new roles demand advanced cognitive, digital, and emotional intelligence skills (Davenport and Kirby, 2020). For HR, this creates a dual responsibility: managing technological displacement while developing adaptive learning cultures. As Marler and Fisher (2019) note, HR professionals themselves face obsolescence unless they acquire competencies in data analytics, digital ethics, and change management.

Employee expectations are also shifting toward personalised development, social responsibility, and meaningful engagement (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). In this context, TM is no longer a top-down process but a partnership model, co-created with employees through transparent career pathways and inclusive development opportunities. Organisations that fail to integrate employee voice into TM strategies risk disengagement and high turnover, especially among younger generations (CIPD, 2023).

Finally, institutional volatility in emerging economies amplifies these challenges. Limited infrastructure, unstable governance, and insufficient educational alignment hinder talent pipeline development (Khanna and Palepu, 2020). Without strategic collaboration among business, government, and academia, TM initiatives risk remaining fragmented and short-term.

Emerging Trends in Global Talent Management

Despite these challenges, several key trends are reshaping the global TM agenda.

a) From Talent Scarcity to Capability Ecosystems
The earlier "war for talent" paradigm is being replaced by a focus on capability ecosystems — collaborative networks that integrate internal employees, external partners, freelancers, and digital platforms (Sparrow et al., 2022). This evolution reflects the recognition that talent no longer resides solely within organisational boundaries. Instead, competitive advantage arises from orchestrating diverse sources of expertise and knowledge across global ecosystems (Vrontis et al., 2022).

b) From Static Roles to Skills-Based Organisations
Global firms are increasingly adopting skills-based models that transcend traditional job architectures. As AI and automation blur role boundaries, organisations design flexible structures around dynamic skill clusters and project-based work (Susskind and Susskind, 2020). HR's role evolves toward curating continuous learning experiences, facilitating mobility, and enabling workforce agility.

c) From Expatriation to Digital and Virtual Mobility
Advances in connectivity and collaboration technologies have made physical relocation less essential for global participation. Virtual mobility enables talent to contribute to multinational projects without migration, expanding inclusion and reducing cost (Farndale et al., 2021). For emerging economies, this shift offers new opportunities for remote service exports and participation in digital value chains.

d) From Exclusive to Inclusive Talent Strategies
Traditional TM models often prioritised high performers, perpetuating elitist selection systems (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). Contemporary approaches, however, promote inclusive TM — recognising that all employees possess potential that can be developed through learning and empowerment (Swailes, Downs and Orr, 2014). This inclusivity aligns with global goals of social equity and sustainable development, especially in regions with high youth unemployment.

e) Integration of Technology and Analytics
Digitalisation has embedded analytics into every stage of TM, from predictive recruitment to learning management systems. AI enhances pattern recognition, bias detection, and personalised development

planning (Meijerink et al., 2021). Yet, as several studies warn, overreliance on algorithmic decision-making may erode human judgment and ethical sensitivity (Marler and Fisher, 2019).

These trends collectively point toward a redefinition of TM as a strategic, data-informed, and human-centred system. HR leaders must integrate technological tools while preserving relational and ethical dimensions of talent management.

Digital Globalisation and the Reconfiguration of Work

Digital globalisation — the transnational flow of data, knowledge, and digital services — has become the defining force of the twenty-first-century economy (Lund et al., 2019). It differs from earlier globalisation phases by shifting competitive advantage from physical assets to digital intelligence. Organisations now operate as digitally networked enterprises where innovation, collaboration, and work occur through global digital ecosystems (Jacobides, Cennamo and Gawer, 2018).

For HRM, this transformation redefines both the location and nature of work. Global digital platforms such as Upwork or Toptal enable borderless talent sourcing, while collaboration technologies dissolve geographical barriers (Kuhn, Milasi and Yoon, 2020). This "platformisation" of work presents new HR challenges: managing distributed teams, ensuring fair labour standards, and fostering belonging in virtual environments (Caligiuri et al., 2020).

Digital globalisation also accentuates global inequalities. Workers in developed economies often gain access to high-value digital roles, while those in emerging economies are confined to low-cost, task-based outsourcing (Wood et al., 2018). To counteract this, HR strategies must focus on digital inclusion — building competencies that allow employees in developing contexts to move up the value chain (ILO, 2022).

The shift toward digital ecosystems also reconfigures organisational boundaries. The "firm" is now an open system engaging with freelancers, AI agents, and virtual teams, blurring lines between employees and external collaborators (Vrontis et al., 2022). Consequently, HR's strategic focus extends beyond employment to relationship management across the global talent web.

Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of HRM

AI has moved from a peripheral technological tool to a central driver of HR transformation. It now supports decision-making in recruitment, performance, compensation, and learning, often outperforming human intuition in data accuracy and predictive capability (Meijerink et al., 2021).

However, the integration of AI introduces a profound paradigm shift in HR's epistemology — from intuition-based judgment to evidence-based algorithmic reasoning (Tursunbayeva, Di Lauro and Pagliari, 2021). This reorientation enhances strategic credibility but raises ethical and governance concerns, including privacy, bias, and accountability (European Commission, 2021).

For emerging economies, AI offers both opportunities and constraints. It can democratise access to global labour markets through digital tools but is constrained by limited data infrastructure and AI literacy (Budhwar et al., 2022). Consequently, HR leaders in these regions must balance global best practices with contextual adaptation — a process referred to by Farndale et al. (2021) as "glocalisation of HRM."

Strategically, AI's promise lies in augmentation rather than automation. Davenport and Kirby (2020) argue that the most competitive organisations will be those that integrate hybrid intelligence, where machines enhance — not replace — human insight. For HR, this means developing roles that combine analytical and ethical competencies: interpreting data, ensuring fairness, and guiding digital transformation with empathy and integrity.

Skills Transformation in the AI Era

As AI reshapes job architectures, the demand for human capabilities evolves toward adaptability, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence (World Economic Forum, 2023). The challenge lies not only in technical upskilling but in fostering learning agility — the ability to continuously acquire, apply, and transfer knowledge across contexts (Teece, 2018).

In emerging economies, structural mismatches between education systems and digital labour markets impede this transformation (Khanna and Palepu, 2020). HR leaders thus assume a quasi-policy role, partnering with educational institutions and governments to align curricula with market needs. This tripartite collaboration is increasingly seen as essential for national competitiveness (UNDP, 2023).

Moreover, organisations are shifting from one-off training models to learning ecosystems that integrate technology, peer learning, and on-the-job development (Haenlein and Kaplan, 2021). AI-enabled learning management systems can personalise content, monitor progress, and predict future learning needs — a shift that redefines HR as a curator of lifelong learning pathways.

Institutional Contexts and Challenges in Emerging Economies

Emerging economies face distinctive constraints in adopting AI-enabled HR systems, rooted in institutional and infrastructural gaps (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2023). The institutional theory of HRM (Paauwe and Farndale, 2017) highlights how formal and informal structures — regulations, norms, and cultural logics — shape HR practices. Weak digital infrastructure, limited data protection frameworks, and inconsistent labour laws hinder innovation and trust in AI adoption.

Furthermore, socio-economic disparities and gender gaps reduce access to digital employment opportunities (ILO, 2022). Addressing these barriers requires institutional entrepreneurship — where HR leaders advocate for policy reforms, ethical guidelines, and skill development initiatives (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). Thus, HR's strategic role extends beyond firm-level outcomes to national capability building.

However, emerging economies also hold demographic and developmental advantages: youthful populations, expanding digital infrastructure, and increasing governmental investment in innovation ecosystems (World Bank, 2022). These provide fertile conditions for leapfrogging into AI-enabled talent systems — provided HR strategies align with inclusive and sustainable development agendas.

Toward an Integrative Framework: AI-Enabled Global Talent Strategy

Synthesising these strands, AI and digital globalisation emerge as intertwined forces driving the reconfiguration of TM. AI enhances data-driven insight and predictive capacity, while digital globalisation expands the reach and diversity of talent networks. Together, they necessitate a strategic realignment of HR toward AI-enabled Global Talent Strategy (AIGTS).

The proposed AIGTS framework comprises four interrelated dimensions:

1. Digital Capability Building — embedding continuous upskilling, AI literacy, and adaptive learning within organisational culture (Teece, 2018).
2. Inclusive Workforce Participation — ensuring equal access to digital opportunities and mitigating socio-economic disparities (ILO, 2022).
3. Strategic Agility — enabling HR systems to anticipate, interpret, and respond rapidly to global and technological changes (Sparrow et al., 2022).
4. Ethical and Sustainable Governance — integrating fairness, transparency, and human oversight into AI-driven HR processes (Meijerink et al., 2021).

This integrative model positions HR as both an architect of capability ecosystems and a custodian of ethical digital transformation. It also reframes TM as a societal mechanism — not only for firm-level competitiveness but for equitable participation in the global digital economy.

Findings

The findings are presented across four major thematic dimensions that emerged from data analysis:

1. The transformation of talent strategy through digital globalisation
2. The strategic and operational adoption of AI in HRM

3. Emerging skill and capability frameworks
4. Institutional enablers and barriers in emerging economies

Each theme is discussed below, linking empirical observations to the conceptual framework developed in the literature review.

Transformation of Talent Strategy through Digital Globalisation

Interview data revealed that digital globalisation has redefined the architecture of talent management, shifting HR priorities from local workforce planning to globally distributed capability coordination. Respondents across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East consistently described how global digital connectivity has "flattened organisational structures," enabling remote collaboration and cross-border project integration.

A regional HR director for a financial services firm in the UAE noted:

"We no longer think in terms of 'local versus expatriate' talent. Our teams are hybrid, digital, and distributed. The key challenge is not where people are but how well they are digitally connected and culturally aligned."

This reflects a conceptual shift from traditional expatriation to digital mobility. HR leaders emphasised that digital globalisation allows firms in emerging economies to access niche expertise previously limited to advanced markets, particularly in analytics, cybersecurity, and AI programming. However, this access is tempered by infrastructural disparities and inconsistent digital literacy levels.

Several participants described "talent ecosystem thinking" — managing both internal employees and external digital contributors within an integrated framework. This aligns with the notion of capability ecosystems (Sparrow et al., 2022), where value creation occurs through networks rather than hierarchies.

Organisations reported that digitalisation increased agility but also blurred employment boundaries. Many firms rely on "extended workforce models" that combine employees, contractors, and gig workers. HR leaders viewed this flexibility positively for innovation but raised concerns about long-term engagement and learning continuity.

These observations indicate that digital globalisation is fostering pluralistic talent systems characterised by fluid roles, global collaboration, and decentralised work structures. Yet, the sustainability of such systems depends on HR's ability to integrate inclusion, learning, and strategic coherence across distributed teams.

The Strategic and Operational Adoption of AI in HRM

AI adoption emerged as a central but uneven dimension across the cases. Almost all organisations reported deploying AI tools for recruitment, data analytics, or workforce planning, but strategic integration varied by sector and maturity level.

Large multinationals operating in emerging economies were early adopters, using AI to enhance efficiency in screening, performance appraisal, and predictive attrition analysis. For example, one technology company in Malaysia described using AI-driven platforms to "model future skill demand and succession scenarios." These applications enhanced decision accuracy and reduced administrative burdens.

However, smaller local enterprises adopted AI more cautiously, citing resource constraints and ethical uncertainty. A Nigerian HR leader explained:

"We see AI as useful, but we don't yet have the data infrastructure to rely on it. There's also concern about bias — especially when systems are designed outside our local context."

This reflects the institutional asymmetry discussed by Budhwar and Mellahi (2023), where technological innovation outpaces policy and ethical frameworks.

A key insight across interviews was the shift in HR roles — from transactional execution to strategic interpretation. HR professionals increasingly position themselves as "translators between data and human judgment." One HR transformation manager in India remarked:

"AI gives us more data than ever, but the human challenge is knowing what it means. We've become data interpreters and ethicists as much as HR managers."

This theme underscores the emergence of hybrid intelligence (Davenport and Kirby, 2020), where human insight and algorithmic processing co-produce strategic value.

Nonetheless, participants noted persistent challenges: limited AI literacy, insufficient investment in digital HR infrastructure, and ethical concerns over transparency. These issues highlight the duality of AI adoption — both an enabler of strategic foresight and a source of organisational risk.

Overall, AI is transforming HRM from a support function into a data-driven strategic capability, but sustainable implementation depends on developing human skills to complement technological tools and ensuring contextual sensitivity in emerging economies.

Emerging Skill and Capability Frameworks

Across all regions, HR leaders highlighted a profound transformation in required workforce skills. This finding echoes the skills-based organisation trend identified in the literature (Vrontis et al., 2022). Respondents emphasised that technical expertise alone no longer guarantees employability; adaptive learning, analytical thinking, and socio-emotional intelligence are equally critical.

A common theme was the move from job-based structures to skill-based ecosystems. An HR Director in Kenya explained:

"We've stopped designing roles around job titles. Instead, we build teams around capabilities — data analysis, design thinking, communication — and move people fluidly across projects."

AI was perceived as both a disruptor and a learning catalyst. Many firms are investing in AI literacy programmes to prepare employees for co-working with intelligent systems. One manufacturing organisation in Jordan launched a "Digital Academy" to upskill employees in data analytics and AI-driven process improvement, reporting improved innovation and retention rates.

Respondents also acknowledged the growing importance of human-centred skills such as creativity, collaboration, and ethical reasoning. Several participants used the term "human advantage" to describe attributes that machines cannot replicate — emotional intelligence, empathy, and cross-cultural sensitivity. This supports the argument by Davenport and Kirby (2020) that human value in the AI era lies in areas of judgment, creativity, and connection.

However, skill transformation remains constrained by education-employment misalignment. HR leaders lamented that university curricula in many emerging economies remain theoretical, outdated, or disconnected from digital labour market demands. As one policy officer in Ghana observed:

"We're producing graduates who can't fit into digital work systems. The curriculum still reflects industrial-era thinking."

To mitigate this, many respondents advocated for public-private collaboration in skill development. Partnerships between corporations, universities, and government agencies were viewed as essential for building national capability ecosystems.

Thus, findings reveal that AI-enabled talent strategies must prioritise continuous reskilling, institutional partnerships, and integration of humanistic capabilities to sustain competitiveness and inclusion.

Institutional Enablers and Barriers in Emerging Economies

Institutional context emerged as a powerful determinant of how AI and globalisation influence HR strategies. While digitalisation offers opportunities for integration into global labour networks, the ability to capitalise on these depends heavily on national policy frameworks, education systems, and infrastructure quality.

Participants consistently described policy misalignment between technological innovation and workforce readiness. A senior HR policy adviser in the Philippines noted:

"We have national digital strategies, but HR and education policies lag behind. Organisations innovate faster than governments can regulate or support."

This gap reflects a broader institutional lag — where regulatory and normative structures fail to evolve alongside digital transformation (Scott, 2014). In many cases, governments promote digitalisation without investing sufficiently in training systems, connectivity, or social protections.

Cultural norms also influence HR adoption of AI. In collectivist societies, automation was sometimes perceived as a threat to relational trust or social cohesion. An HR manager in Indonesia commented that

employees often view AI "as a sign of job insecurity, not progress." Thus, effective digital transformation requires not only technology but cultural change management.

Despite these barriers, participants identified several enablers of progress:

- Youth demographics: young, digitally native populations eager to engage with technology.
- Policy experimentation: national AI strategies in countries such as the UAE, Malaysia, and India supporting HR digitalisation.
- International collaboration: donor-funded initiatives (e.g., UNDP digital skills programmes) fostering capacity building.

These enablers demonstrate the potential for leapfrogging — using technological innovation to bypass legacy systems and accelerate development (Khanna and Palepu, 2020). However, without institutional coherence, such progress remains fragmented.

Hence, findings suggest that AI-enabled talent strategies in emerging economies succeed when supported by multi-level alignment among organisational innovation, government policy, and societal readiness.

Summary of Findings

Across all themes, the data illustrate that AI and digital globalisation are fundamentally reshaping global talent strategies through interconnected mechanisms of technological augmentation, skill transformation, and institutional adaptation.

The findings can be summarised as follows:

- Digital globalisation has transformed HR from a localised administrative function into a cross-border orchestrator of distributed talent ecosystems.
- AI integration enhances efficiency and foresight but requires human interpretation, ethical governance, and contextual sensitivity.
- Skills-based organisational models are replacing traditional job hierarchies, demanding continuous learning and human-centred capability building.
- Institutional frameworks in emerging economies both enable and constrain transformation, depending on alignment between education, technology, and labour policy.

These outcomes collectively affirm the conceptual framework of AI-enabled Global Talent Strategy (AIGTS) proposed in the literature review. HR's evolving role is not merely operational but systemic — shaping how technology, policy, and human potential converge to create inclusive competitiveness in the digital global economy.

Discussion and Analysis

Reinterpreting Global Talent Strategy in the Context of AI and Digital Globalisation

The findings underscore that digital globalisation and AI adoption are not peripheral trends but structural forces transforming the foundations of talent management. In line with Collings, Mellahi and Cascio (2019), global talent strategy has shifted from a resource-centric model toward a capability ecosystem orientation, where value creation emerges from orchestrating distributed expertise across digital and organisational boundaries.

Participants' accounts of hybrid, project-based, and digitally distributed workforces confirm that the "traditional expatriation" model of global mobility is being supplanted by digital and virtual mobility. This transformation aligns with Farndale et al. (2021), who describe the emergence of borderless work ecosystems in which digital infrastructure, not physical relocation, facilitates global collaboration.

In this new paradigm, HR no longer functions merely as a facilitator of talent mobility but as a strategic integrator — designing platforms, learning systems, and ethical governance structures that support transnational work. The shift reflects Teece's (2018) theory of dynamic capabilities, as HR systems must continuously reconfigure to align people, processes, and technologies with a rapidly evolving global environment.

Importantly, this transformation also redefines the notion of competitiveness. Instead of relying on location-based advantages, emerging economies can now leverage digital connectivity and youthful

demographics to participate in global value chains. Yet, as Khanna and Palepu (2020) argue, this potential is contingent upon the ability of organisations and institutions to bridge the digital capability divide.

Thus, the study expands the theoretical understanding of global talent management by situating it within an AI-enabled digital globalisation framework, where HR's strategic contribution lies in managing hybrid workforces and digital ecosystems that integrate human and machine intelligence.

The Dual Role of AI: Strategic Enabler and Ethical Disruptor

The data reveal that AI serves both as an enabler of strategic insight and a disruptor of traditional HR practice. Consistent with Meijerink et al. (2021), AI enhances predictive accuracy in workforce planning, recruitment, and retention. However, participants' experiences also highlight risks related to bias, interpretability, and ethical governance.

The observation that HR professionals now act as "translators between data and human judgment" supports the notion of hybrid intelligence proposed by Davenport and Kirby (2020). In this configuration, AI performs the computational functions of data analysis, while humans provide contextual interpretation and ethical oversight. This symbiosis creates what Haenlein and Kaplan (2021) describe as augmented decision-making capacity.

However, findings also reveal structural disparities in AI readiness across organisations and countries. Smaller enterprises in emerging economies often lack data infrastructure and digital literacy, echoing Budhwar and Mellahi's (2023) critique of uneven technological diffusion. Consequently, HR's role extends beyond internal capability development to institutional advocacy — influencing national policy, education, and industry standards to support equitable digital transformation.

This duality reinforces the need for a human-centred AI paradigm in HRM. Ethical and strategic integration requires HR leaders to balance technological efficiency with fairness, inclusion, and transparency. As Marler and Fisher (2019) argue, AI cannot replace the human judgment necessary to interpret complex social dynamics. Therefore, HR must develop dual competencies: technological fluency and ethical literacy.

The study thus contributes to the theoretical debate by positioning AI not as a deterministic disruptor but as a context-dependent enabler whose value is contingent upon human governance and institutional maturity.

Reframing Skills and Capability Development in the AI Era

A major insight from this research is the emergence of skills-based organisations that prioritise adaptability, learning agility, and emotional intelligence over fixed job roles. This finding supports the predictions of Vrontis et al. (2022) and Sparrow et al. (2022) regarding the transition from role-based to capability-based structures.

Respondents described a shift from hierarchical career paths to dynamic skill clusters, where employees move fluidly between projects based on capability needs. This evolution reflects Teece's (2018) concept of microfoundations of dynamic capabilities — individual skills and learning processes that enable organisational agility.

Furthermore, the emphasis on AI literacy and human-centred competencies illustrates the dual challenge of technological and socio-emotional skill development. While AI literacy ensures employability in digital contexts, humanistic skills such as empathy, communication, and ethical reasoning sustain the relational fabric of organisations. This supports Davenport and Kirby's (2020) argument that human value lies in judgment, creativity, and compassion — capacities machines cannot replicate.

However, participants also pointed to systemic weaknesses in education systems, consistent with ILO (2022) findings on skills mismatch in emerging economies. The disconnect between academic curricula and digital industry needs creates barriers to workforce readiness. In this context, HR must assume a proactive role as a boundary-spanning actor — bridging the gap between academia, industry, and policy.

Thus, capability development in the AI era demands a shift from training to learning ecosystems, integrating continuous learning, digital tools, and cross-sector partnerships. This reframing positions HR as both a learning architect and a national capability enabler.

Institutional Constraints and the Challenge of Contextual Adaptation

The findings affirm the relevance of institutional theory (Scott, 2014; Paauwe and Farndale, 2017) in understanding how emerging economies adapt global HRM models. Institutional factors — such as regulatory coherence, cultural norms, and digital infrastructure — shape both the pace and direction of AI adoption.

Respondents' references to policy misalignment and institutional lag mirror Budhwar and Mellahi's (2023) critique that digital HR transformation in developing contexts often outpaces national governance capacity. Without supportive policy frameworks, investments in AI and digital learning remain fragmented.

Cultural dimensions further influence adoption patterns. In collectivist societies, automation may be perceived as threatening social cohesion, reflecting Hofstede's (2001) cultural value dimension of uncertainty avoidance. Therefore, successful transformation requires culturally sensitive change management strategies.

Nonetheless, the presence of youthful populations, entrepreneurial initiatives, and cross-border collaborations indicates that emerging economies possess the potential to leapfrog traditional industrial stages through digital innovation (Khanna and Palepu, 2020). The challenge lies in building institutional alignment — harmonising organisational innovation with national policy and educational reform.

Hence, the study extends institutional theory by demonstrating that HR leaders in emerging economies act as institutional entrepreneurs (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006), shaping norms and influencing policies that govern digital and AI transformation. This dual agency — within organisations and at societal level — reinforces HR's strategic and developmental significance.

Toward an Integrative Model: The AI-Enabled Global Talent Strategy (AIGTS)

Integrating these insights, the study confirms and refines the conceptual model of AI-enabled Global Talent Strategy (AIGTS) introduced in the literature review. Empirical evidence supports the four dimensions of this framework, offering theoretical coherence and practical applicability.

1. Digital Capability Building: Findings demonstrate that continuous reskilling and AI literacy are foundational to global competitiveness. This dimension operationalises Teece's (2018) dynamic capability theory in HR contexts, linking organisational learning with adaptability.
2. Inclusive Workforce Participation: Evidence of skill inequality and digital exclusion validates the need for inclusion-oriented HR policies aligned with ILO (2022) frameworks. Inclusion is not a peripheral concern but a structural component of sustainable competitiveness.
3. Strategic Agility: The emergence of flexible, project-based, and transnational work models confirms the growing importance of agility. HR functions must act as agile orchestrators, capable of sensing technological shifts and redeploying talent rapidly.
4. Ethical and Sustainable Governance: Ethical oversight of AI — from bias prevention to data transparency — is essential to maintain trust. HR's role expands to include digital ethics and governance advocacy, in line with Meijerink et al. (2021).

This framework advances HRM theory by connecting micro-level practices (AI adoption, learning design) with macro-level outcomes (institutional development, inclusion, and competitiveness). It positions HR as both a strategic actor and a societal change agent.

The study bridges three domains — strategic HRM, institutional theory, and digital transformation — contributing a multidimensional understanding of how AI and globalisation intersect with talent management. It challenges linear models of HR innovation, proposing a context-contingent approach that recognises the interdependence of technology, institutions, and human agency. The findings suggest that HR leaders in emerging economies must assume new roles as digital capability architects, ethical gatekeepers, and institutional influencers. Organisations should invest not only in technology but in human capacity — ensuring that AI adoption enhances, rather than replaces, human potential.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research
Conclusion

This study set out to explore how global talent strategies are being re-architected under the dual forces of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital globalisation, with a specific focus on the context of emerging economies. Through a qualitative interpretivist approach involving HR leaders, policy experts, and technology consultants across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, the study has illuminated how technological advancement, institutional adaptation, and human capability development intersect to redefine the purpose and scope of human resource management (HRM). The findings clearly demonstrate that digital globalisation and AI adoption are not merely operational tools but transformative forces reshaping the entire logic of global HRM. Organisations in emerging economies are increasingly engaging in cross-border digital ecosystems, leveraging remote collaboration, and accessing global expertise beyond geographical limits. Yet, the research reveals a profound paradox: while digitalisation and AI democratise participation in the global economy, they also risk deepening inequality where institutional readiness, infrastructure, and skill capacity lag behind. This duality underscores that technology alone cannot deliver competitiveness without parallel investment in human and institutional capability. Empirically, the study identifies four interdependent dynamics defining AI-enabled global talent strategy: (1) the rise of distributed and digitally integrated workforce models; (2) the strategic but uneven adoption of AI in HRM functions; (3) the transformation toward skills-based, continuous learning ecosystems; and (4) the influence of institutional frameworks on shaping inclusion and sustainability. Theoretically, the research advances understanding by developing and validating the AI-Enabled Global Talent Strategy (AIGTS) framework — an integrative model linking digital capability building, inclusive participation, strategic agility, and ethical governance. This framework extends global talent management (GTM) theory by embedding it within the digital and institutional realities of emerging economies. It shifts the focus from talent as a static resource to talent as an evolving capability embedded in adaptive ecosystems. Moreover, by applying institutional theory, the study demonstrates that HR leaders in emerging economies act not only as organisational strategists but as institutional entrepreneurs — shaping policy, advocacy, and national capacity for digital transformation. The study's contribution lies in articulating HRM as a multi-level capability system: simultaneously organisational, technological, and societal. It reframes HR as a generator of value not only for firms but for nations seeking to compete and collaborate in digitally interconnected labour markets.

Implications for Practice

This study offers actionable guidance for HR practitioners, policymakers, and educators in emerging economies:

- Strategic Repositioning of HR: HR leaders must act as digital architects, integrating AI and analytics into workforce planning while safeguarding transparency, fairness, and human oversight through ongoing digital and ethical training.
- Shift to Skills-Based Models: Organisations should move from rigid job hierarchies to skills-based architectures supported by AI-driven analytics, enabling workforce agility, innovation, and dynamic redeployment.
- Inclusive Participation: HR strategies must reduce digital exclusion by widening access to training for women, youth, and underrepresented groups to prevent technological marginalisation.
- Ethical Governance: AI systems should be transparent, auditable, and aligned with ethical standards. HR must collaborate with IT, compliance, and legal teams to ensure fairness and accountability.
- Cross-Sector Collaboration: Strong partnerships between business, academia, and government can close skill gaps and align national learning ecosystems with global digital demands.
- Cultural Transformation: HR professionals should cultivate trust, adaptability, and digital confidence, ensuring psychological safety in increasingly automated and remote workplaces.

Policy Implications

Governments should develop integrated national strategies linking technology, education, and labour policy. Priorities include:

- Investing in digital infrastructure and affordable access to enable broad participation in the digital economy.
- Embedding data literacy, ethical AI, and problem-solving across education systems.
- Establishing regulatory frameworks to ensure accountability and fairness in AI-based employment.
- Encouraging multilateral partnerships (e.g., ILO, UNDP) for digital capacity-building and sustainable job creation.

Theoretical Implications

The study contributes by:

- Extending Global Talent Management Theory toward a multi-level model linking individual, organisational, and institutional dynamics.
- Integrating Strategic HRM and Institutional Theory to show how contextual forces shape technological adoption.
- Humanising Digital Transformation Literature through the AI-Enabled Global Talent Strategy (AIGTS) framework, positioning AI as augmentation, not replacement, of human capability.

Limitations

While offering depth and contextual richness, the study's qualitative scope limits generalisability. The purposive sample may not capture all regional or sectoral differences. Findings represent a transitional moment in AI's evolution and would benefit from future cross-country comparative analyses.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies could:

- Conduct comparative longitudinal research on how emerging economies evolve AI-enabled HR systems.
- Apply quantitative or mixed-methods designs to test the impact of AI-based HRM on performance and inclusion.
- Explore sector-specific variations (e.g., manufacturing, education, health).
- Examine ethical governance mechanisms in HR algorithms and data use.
- Develop models of HR-institutional co-evolution to explain how HR leaders influence national digital readiness.
- Investigate the human experience of AI at work, focusing on adaptation, trust, and resistance to algorithmic systems

Reference

Bahl, M., Sarrazin, H. and Wee, D. (2023) The economic potential of generative AI: The next productivity frontier. McKinsey Global Institute.

Barney, J. (1991) 'Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage', Journal of Management, 17(1), pp. 99–120.

Becker, G. (1964) Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Blau, P. (1964) Exchange and Power in Social Life. New York: Wiley.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2019) 'Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis', Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11(4), pp. 589–597.

Bryman, A. (2016) Social Research Methods. 5th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Budhwar, P. and Mellahi, K. (2023) 'Human resource management in emerging markets: Challenges and opportunities in the digital age', International Journal of Human Resource Management, 34(4), pp. 567–589.

Budhwar, P., Tung, R., Varma, A. and Do, H. (2022) 'Developments in human resource management in emerging markets: Current research and future directions', Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 39(2), pp. 349–375.

Caligiuri, P., De Cieri, H. and Minbaeva, D. (2020) 'International HRM insights for navigating the COVID-19 pandemic: Implications for future research and practice', Journal of International Business Studies, 51(5), pp. 697–713.

Chambers, E.G., Foulon, M., Handfield-Jones, H., Hankin, S.M. and Michaels, E.G. (1998) 'The war for talent', The McKinsey Quarterly, 3, pp. 44–57.
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2023) People Profession 2030: A collective view of future trends. London: CIPD.
Collings, D.G., Mellahi, K. and Cascio, W.F. (2019) 'Global talent management and performance in multinational enterprises: A multilevel perspective', Journal of Management, 45(2), pp. 540–566.
Collings, D.G., Scullion, H. and Vaiman, V. (2021) 'Talent management: Progress and prospects', Human Resource Management Review, 31(4), 100727.
Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N. (2018) Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches. 4th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Davenport, T.H. and Kirby, J. (2020) Human + Machine: Reimagining Work in the Age of AI. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.
DiMaggio, P. and Powell, W. (1983) 'The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields', American Sociological Review, 48(2), pp. 147–160.
Eisenhardt, K.M. (2021) 'What is the Eisenhardt method, really?', Strategic Organization, 19(1), pp. 147–160.
European Commission (2021) Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI. Brussels: European Commission.
Farndale, E., Scullion, H. and Sparrow, P. (2021) 'Global talent management: Challenges and opportunities in the digital era', Human Resource Management Review, 31(4), 100753.
Fleming, P. (2021) Dark Academia: How Universities Die. London: Pluto Press.
Gallardo-Gallardo, E., Thunnissen, M. and Scullion, H. (2020) 'Talent management: Context matters', International Journal of Human Resource Management, 31(4), pp. 457–473.
Graham, M. and Anwar, M.A. (2019) 'The global gig economy: Towards a planetary labour market?', First Monday, 24(4).
Greenwood, R. and Suddaby, R. (2006) 'Institutional entrepreneurship in mature fields: The big five accounting firms', Academy of Management Journal, 49(1), pp. 27–48.
Haenlein, M. and Kaplan, A. (2021) 'Artificial intelligence and machine learning in management education: The challenges ahead', Journal of Management Education, 45(3), pp. 319–333.
Hofstede, G. (2001) Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviours, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations. 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
International Labour Organization (ILO) (2022) Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people. Geneva: ILO.
IBM Institute for Business Value (2023) The 2023 Global AI Adoption Index. New York: IBM.
Jacobides, M.G., Cennamo, C. and Gawer, A. (2018) 'Towards a theory of ecosystems', Strategic Management Journal, 39(8), pp. 2255–2276.
Khanna, T. and Palepu, K. (2020) Winning in Emerging Markets: A Road Map for Strategy and Execution. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
Kuhn, S., Milasi, S. and Yoon, S. (2020) World Employment and Social Outlook 2020: The Role of Digital Labour Platforms in Transforming the World of Work. Geneva: ILO.
Kvale, S. and Brinkmann, S. (2015) InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing. 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Lacity, M.C. and Willcocks, L.P. (2021) Becoming Strategic with Robotic Process Automation. London: SB Publishing.
Lepak, D.P. and Snell, S.A. (1999) 'The human resource architecture: Toward a theory of human capital allocation and development', Academy of Management Review, 24(1), pp. 31–48.
Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (2013) The Constructivist Credo. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
Lund, S., Manyika, J., Woetzel, J., Bughin, J., Krishnan, M. and Seong, J. (2019) Globalization in Transition: The Future of Trade and Value Chains. McKinsey Global Institute.
Marler, J.H. and Fisher, S.L. (2019) 'The case for human resources analytics and AI', Human Resource Management Review, 29(1), pp. 1–9.
McKinsey Global Institute (2022) Digital Globalization: The New Era of Data Flows. New York: McKinsey.
Meijerink, J., Bondarouk, T. and Lepak, D.P. (2021) 'When HRM systems combine digital and human elements: Toward a theory of HRM hybridity', Human Resource Management Review, 31(4), 100762.
Opdenakker, R. (2006) 'Advantages and disadvantages of four interview techniques in qualitative research', Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 7(4).
Oosthuizen, M. and Dachs, W. (2021) 'Digital transformation in Africa: Challenges and opportunities', African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development, 13(7), pp. 735–748.
Paauwe, J. and Farndale, E. (2017) Strategy, HRM, and Performance: A Contextual Approach. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Petriglieri, G., Ashford, S. and Wrzesniewski, A. (2019) 'Agony and ecstasy in the gig economy: Cultivating holding environments for precarious and personalized work identities', Administrative Science Quarterly, 64(1), pp. 124–170.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2019) Research Methods for Business Students. 8th edn. Harlow: Pearson.

Scott, W.R. (2014) Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities. 4th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Scullion, H. and Collings, D.G. (2011) Global Talent Management. London: Routledge.

Sonnenberg, M., van Zijderveld, V. and Brinks, M. (2014) 'The role of talent-perception incongruence in effective talent management', Journal of World Business, 49(2), pp. 272–280.

Sparrow, P., Farndale, E. and Scullion, H. (2022) 'Reframing global talent management: Future directions for theory and practice', Human Resource Management Journal, 32(1), pp. 5–24.

Susskind, R. and Susskind, D. (2020) The Future of the Professions: How Technology Will Transform the Work of Human Experts. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swailes, S., Downs, Y. and Orr, K. (2014) 'Conceptualising inclusive talent management', Personnel Review, 43(2), pp. 215–232.

Teece, D.J. (2018) 'Dynamic capabilities as (workable) management theory', Journal of Management and Organization, 24(3), pp. 359–368.

Tursunbayeva, A., Di Lauro, S. and Pagliari, C. (2021) 'People analytics and AI in HRM: A systematic review of ethical implications', Human Resource Management Review, 31(4), 100789.

Tymon, W.G. and Stumpf, S.A. (2020) 'Exploring talent management in India: The neglected role of intrinsic rewards', South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management, 7(1), pp. 31–54.

Ulrich, D. and Dulebohn, J.H. (2018) 'Are we there yet? What's next for HR?', Human Resource Management Review, 28(3), pp. 257–263.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2023) Digital Readiness Assessment: Accelerating Digital Transformation in Developing Countries. New York: UNDP.

Vrontis, D., Christofi, M., Pereira, V. and Tarba, S. (2022) 'Artificial intelligence, robotics, advanced technologies and human resource management: A systematic review', International Journal of Human Resource Management, 33(6), pp. 1237–1272.

Wood, A., Lehdonvirta, V. and Graham, M. (2018) 'Workers of the Internet unite? Online freelancer organisation among remote gig economy workers in six Asian and African countries', New Technology, Work and Employment, 33(2), pp. 95–112.

World Bank (2022) World Development Report 2022: The Changing Nature of Work. Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Economic Forum (2023) The Future of Jobs Report 2023. Geneva: World Economic Forum.

Wright, P.M., Coff, R. and Moliterno, T.P. (2014) 'Strategic human capital: Crossing the great divide', Journal of Management, 40(2), pp. 353–370.