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# Integration of HR Management and Digital Talent Management in Improving the Competitiveness of Public Organizations: An Empirical Study in Local Government Agencies

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*Abstract*

*The accelerating wave of digital transformation is compelling public sector institutions to strengthen their competitiveness. This is achieved not only by leveraging advanced technologies but also by optimizing human resource management strategies. The purpose of this research is to examine how Human Resource Management (HRM) and Digital Talent Management (DTM) practices influence organizational competitiveness, while also assessing the combined role of both frameworks. Using a quantitative method that applies Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), this study collected data from 380 government employees in the Toraja region. The analysis results indicate that HRM substantially strengthens competitiveness by enhancing workforce capabilities, motivation, and commitment (β=0.38; p<0.05). Similarly, DTM has a significant positive impact (β=0.42; p<0.05), highlighting that cultivating and retaining digital talent are crucial drivers for innovation and organizational flexibility. Most notably, when HRM and DTM are integrated, the influence becomes the strongest (β=0.71; p<0.05), demonstrating that sustainable competitiveness is achieved through the synergy between conventional HR systems and digital initiatives. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the discourse on strategic HRM in the digital age. From a practical standpoint, the research emphasizes that local governments should formulate integrated policies that align HRM and DTM to build an adaptive, innovative, and citizen-oriented governance.*

*Keywords: Human Resource Management; Digital Talent Management; Organizational Competitiveness; Public Sector; Digital Transformation*

## Introduction

The phenomenon of digital disruption, driven by the momentum of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the emergence of Society 5.0, has reshaped organizational dynamics worldwide, including in the realm of public administration. Public institutions, once known for rigid and slow-moving bureaucratic systems, are now under immense pressure to innovate, improve service delivery, and create greater public value (Mergel et al., 2020). In this new paradigm, the competitiveness of a public organization should not be viewed merely as competition with other entities, but rather as the ability to adapt, transform, and provide services that are flexible, transparent, and responsive to the increasingly diverse needs of the community (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018). The primary challenge in building such competitiveness lies in developing human resources (HR) that possess digital competencies along with a mindset aligned with contemporary demands.

Globally, concerns about the readiness of public sector HR to embrace digital transformation have become increasingly prominent. According to the OECD (2021), approximately 70% of member states acknowledge that the lack of digital talent serves as a critical barrier to advancing digital government initiatives. Similarly, Deloitte (2020) reports that only 12% of public organizations consider themselves well-prepared for digital disruption, while 85% identify digital leadership and digital skills as the most pressing areas for development. These figures underscore the existence of a significant digital talent gap across the public sector, which, if left unaddressed, can lead to stagnation, inefficiency, and the government's inability to meet service expectations in the digital age.

In Indonesia, the complexity of digital transformation in the public sector is even more pronounced due to the nation's decentralized governance system, where local administrations serve as the primary providers of public services. Despite this crucial role, various assessments indicate that their digital capacity remains underdeveloped. For instance, the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (PANRB) in 2023 reported that the average national score for the public service satisfaction index was 77.89 (on a scale of 100). Although this figure shows gradual progress, it still highlights a significant gap, especially in the digital service dimension. At the same time, the 2023 Information and Communication Technology Development Index (IPTIK) by BPS categorized many regions in Eastern Indonesia—including South Sulawesi and Tana Toraja Regency—as being in the medium-to-low range. The distinctive local conditions of Tana Toraja, shaped by its geography, socio-cultural dynamics, and evolving digital infrastructure, present unique challenges in implementing bureaucratic digital transformation. Consequently, exploring the determinant factors that can enhance the competitiveness of public organizations in such a context becomes both urgent and highly relevant.

To address these challenges, relying solely on traditional human resource management approaches is increasingly insufficient. Public institutions must shift toward a more strategic and future-oriented framework: Digital Talent Management (DTM). DTM refers to the organized effort to identify, attract, develop, retain, and maximize the potential of individuals with the digital expertise required to drive organizational change and strategy (Stoffers et al., 2020). Importantly, this concept goes beyond simply digitalizing recruitment or training processes. It embodies a comprehensive approach that instills a digital mindset across the entire HR management spectrum, including workforce planning, employee development, performance evaluation, and career progression (Tursunbayeva et al., 2022). Nevertheless, a crucial question arises: is the adoption of DTM alone sufficient to guarantee success, or does its effectiveness fundamentally depend on the robustness of existing traditional HR practices?

Previous scholarship has extensively explored strategic human resource (HR) management and digital talent management (DTM), although as two separate areas of study. Empirical evidence confirms that effective HR practices have a positive impact on organizational outcomes (Jiang et al., 2019; Guest, 2018), including in the public domain (Knies et al., 2018). In parallel, a growing body of literature has begun to highlight how DTM contributes to strengthening organizational agility and innovation capacity (Vargas et al., 2023; Ismail et al., 2021). Despite these insights, a notable research gap remains. First, very few studies have explicitly examined how conventional HR management interacts with or integrates into DTM. Most contributions treat the two as separate constructs, whereas in practice, digital talent strategies must operate on top of pre-existing HR policies and systems. Second, the majority of research is still concentrated on private companies and multinational firms, while investigations within the public sector—especially at the local government level in developing nations—are still scarce (Stoffers et al., 2020). Third, there is

limited consensus on the underlying mechanisms through which HR-DTM integration enhances competitiveness. Addressing these shortcomings forms the core rationale of this study.

In response to this gap, this research aims to empirically test the impact of integrating HR management and DTM on public organizational competitiveness, with specific reference to local government institutions in Toraja, namely Tana Toraja and North Toraja. More precisely, the research explores two key questions: to what extent do HR management practices strengthen the competitiveness of public organizations in Tana Toraja, and how significant is the role of DTM in shaping organizational competitiveness across local governments in the Toraja region?.The analytical lens used is the

Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm (Barney, 1991), adapted to the public administration context. RBV argues that sustainable competitive advantage is derived from resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). Within this framework, the integration of robust HR management practices (*as organizational resources*) and digital talent (as human capital resources) is conceptualized as a VRIN bundle that serves as a critical enabler of public sector competitiveness in the digital era. The distinct contribution of this study rests on three dimensions. First, it proposes an integrative model that emphasizes the synergy between HR management and DTM, rather than treating them as isolated constructs. Second, it situates the analysis within the unique context of regional public organizations in Eastern Indonesia, thereby enriching perspectives often dominated by Western-centric literature. Third, the applied implications of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, particularly in formulating comprehensive HR development strategies that not only enhance digital technical competencies but also reinforce the structural HR systems underlying bureaucratic performance. Therefore, this research aspires to make a meaningful contribution both to the theoretical advancement of public sector HR management and to the practical acceleration of bureaucratic digital transformation in Indonesia.Based on the background of the research above, the hypothesis of this research can be formulated, namely

1. H1: HR management practices have a positive and significant influence on the competitiveness of public organizations.
2. H2: The implementation of digital talent management has a positive and significant influence on the competitiveness of public organizations.
3. H3: The integration between HR management and digital talent management has a stronger positive and significant influence on the competitiveness of public organizations than the influence of each variable independently.

**Research Methods**

This study was conducted in two administrative regions of Toraja, namely Tana Toraja and North Toraja Regencies. The selection of these locations was based on strategic considerations, as both regencies are currently accelerating bureaucratic reform and digital transformation through the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE). With a significant number of civil servants distributed across various Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD), these two regions are considered suitable for analyzing the influence of Human Resource (HR) Management and Digital Talent Management (DTM) on organizational competitiveness. Furthermore, the challenging geographical conditions of Toraja highlight the urgency of digitalization to maintain service efficiency, making this setting highly relevant for examining the intersection of HR, digital talent, and bureaucratic competitiveness.

A quantitative research design was used with a causal-associative approach to test the cause-and-effect relationships among the study variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Specifically, the research adopted a cross-sectional survey design, where data were collected at a single point in time to test predetermined hypotheses. This design was chosen because it is appropriate for predicting the impact of independent variables (HR Management and DTM) on the dependent variable (organizational competitiveness) in a relatively large population (Firdaus et al., 2022). The study relied on primary data obtained directly from respondents, with responses measured using a Likert scale. Data collection was conducted through an online, closed-ended questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The online method was deemed effective in reaching respondents spread across the two regencies and also facilitated data processing (Wilson et al., 2021). The questionnaire consisted of four sections: (A) respondent demographics, (B) items measuring HR Management, (C) items measuring DTM, and (D) items assessing organizational competitiveness.

The population comprised all civil servants (ASN) employed across OPDs in Tana Toraja and North Toraja. According to BPS (2023), there are approximately 3,940 ASN in Tana Toraja and 3,460 ASN in North Toraja, resulting in a combined population of 7,400 individuals. Considering the large and geographically dispersed population, a two-stage sampling technique was applied. First, purposive sampling was used to select OPDs identified as having initiated digital transformation programs, based on recommendations from OPD leaders. Second, stratified random sampling was performed within the selected OPDs to ensure representation across hierarchical levels, including leaders, administrators, supervisors, and staff. This two-step process ensured that the sample reflected the diversity of the population.

Using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, the minimum sample size required was calculated to be 380 respondents. To minimize the risk of incomplete responses, the questionnaire was distributed to exactly 380 participants. The instrument items were developed based on theoretical frameworks and adapted from previously validated studies. All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

**Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables**

| Variabel | Conceptual Definition | Indicator |
|---|---|---|
| HR Management ($X_1$) | A set of policies and practices required to run the human aspect of an organization, including recruitment, training, rewards, and performance appraisals. Jiang et al. (2019) | Staffing: The quality of the recruitment and selection process.<br>Training: The availability and quality of training programs.<br>Career Development: Clarity and support for career development plans.<br>Compensation: The fairness and competitiveness of the reward system.<br>Performance Management: Clarity of the performance assessment and feedback system.<br>Employee Engagement: The level of participation and commitment of ASN. |
| Digital Talent Management ($X_2$) | A strategic process to identify, attract, develop, retain, and utilize individuals with the digital skills needed to support organizational transformation. | Identification: The ability of the organization to recognize digital needs and talent.<br>Attraction: Strategies to attract digital talent from the job market. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Stoffers et al. (2020); Vargas et al. (2023) | Development: A program to improve the digital competence of ASN.<br>Retention: Efforts to retain key digital talent.<br>Utilization: Effectiveness in placing and empowering digital talents. |
| Organizational Competitiveness (Y) | The ability of a public organization to provide superior service, adapt to change, innovate, and maintain a good reputation compared to other organizations or service standards.<br>Oberer & Erkollar (2018); Knies et al. (2018) | Quality of Service: The quality and accuracy of public services.<br>Speed of Adaptation: The agility of an organization to respond to change.<br>Service Innovation: The ability to create new services/methods.<br>Cost Efficiency: Optimization of budgets and resources.<br>Organizational Reputation: Image and trust of the community/stakeholders. |

Source: Data processed by author, 2025

Prior to large-scale distribution, the questionnaire underwent a validity and reliability assessment. Convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability were tested using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). Previously, a pilot test was administered to 30–50 respondents to assess preliminary validity and reliability. The evaluation criteria referred to the Corrected Item-Total Correlation with a threshold of > 0.3 and Cronbach's Alpha above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021). An instrument is considered valid and reliable if it meets these benchmarks. For hypothesis testing, the collected data were analyzed using inferential statistical methods with the support of SmartPLS 4.0 software (Ghozali, 2019). The choice of SEM-PLS was based on its advantages in estimating complex structural models that involve multiple latent variables, as well as its tolerance for non-normally distributed data and a moderate sample size (Hair et al., 2021). The data analysis procedure was conducted in two sequential phases: Measurement Model Testing (Outer Model) which tests the relationship between the indicators and their latent variables, and Structural Model Testing (Inner Model) which tests the research hypotheses

## Results and Discussion

### Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of the respondents in this study describe the profile of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in the two Toraja Regencies that served as the research sample. A total of 380 respondents from various Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) participated in completing the questionnaire.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Respondents by Gender

| Gender | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 206 | 54,2 |
| Female | 174 | 45,8 |
| Total | 380 | 100 |

Source: Data processed by author, 2025

The distribution of respondents shows a relatively balanced composition between males (54.2%) and females (45.8%). This indicates that the participation of ASN in the study was not dominated by one gender, allowing the research results to reflect the views of both groups proportionally. This balance is important, especially in the context of readiness to face digital transformation that demands the active involvement of all civil servants.

**Table 2**. Distribution of Respondents by Age

| Age | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| < 30 years old | 76 | 20,0 |
| 31–40 years | 128 | 33,7 |
| 41–50 years | 112 | 29,5 |
| > 50 years | 64 | 16,8 |
| Total | 380 | 100 |

Source: Data processed by author, 2025

The majority of respondents were in the 31–40 age range (33.7%), followed by the 41–50 age group (29.5%). This confirms that most of the civil servants involved in the study are of productive age, where adaptation to digital technology is relatively easier. Meanwhile, respondents over the age of 50 (16.8%) also made an important contribution, reflecting long experience in public service that can be combined with digital innovation.

**Table 3**. Distribution of Respondents by Last Education

| Final Education | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| High School/Vocational School | 30 | 7,9 |
| Diploma (D3) | 42 | 11,1 |
| S1 | 224 | 58,9 |
| S2/S3 | 84 | 22,1 |
| Total | **380** | **100** |

Source: Data processed by author, 2025

Most of the respondents had a Bachelor's (S1) as their last education at 58.9%, followed by postgraduate graduates (S2/S3) at 22.1%. This condition reflects that ASN in Tana Toraja Regency has a relatively high level of education, which supports their academic and professional competence. With this educational composition, the implementation of digital talent management has the potential to be more effective because the ASN has an adequate knowledge base to receive technology-based training and innovation.

**Table 4.** Distribution of Respondents by Position

| Position | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Leadership (Echelon II) | 14 | 3,7 |
| Administrator (Echelon III) | 54 | 14,2 |
| Supervisor (Echelon IV) | 86 | 22,6 |
| Executive | 226 | 59,5 |
| Total | 380 | 100 |

Source: Data processed by author, 2025

The distribution of respondents was dominated by executive employees (59.5%), followed by supervisors (22.6%). The large number of executive employees shows that this study represents more ASNs who play a direct role in public service operations. Their perspective is very important because the executive position is at the forefront of facing the challenges of bureaucratic digitalization. Meanwhile, the participation of structural officials (Echelon II-III) still provides an overview of the direction of policies and strategies implemented at the managerial level.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents based on length of work

| Long Time Working | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| < 5 years | 50 | 13,2 |
| 5–10 years | 92 | 24,2 |
| 11–20 years | 148 | 38,9 |
| > 20 years old | 90 | 23,7 |
| Total | 380 | 100 |

Source: Data processed by author, 2025

The largest group is civil servants with a service period of 11-20 years (38.9%), which indicates the dominance of experienced employees in the bureaucracy. On the other hand, civil servants with a service period of less than 10 years are also quite significant (37.4%), reflecting the regeneration of apparatus with higher potential for technological adaptation. The combination of experience and enthusiasm of the younger generation is an important capital to support the success of digital transformation in the public sector.

## PLS SEM Data Analysis

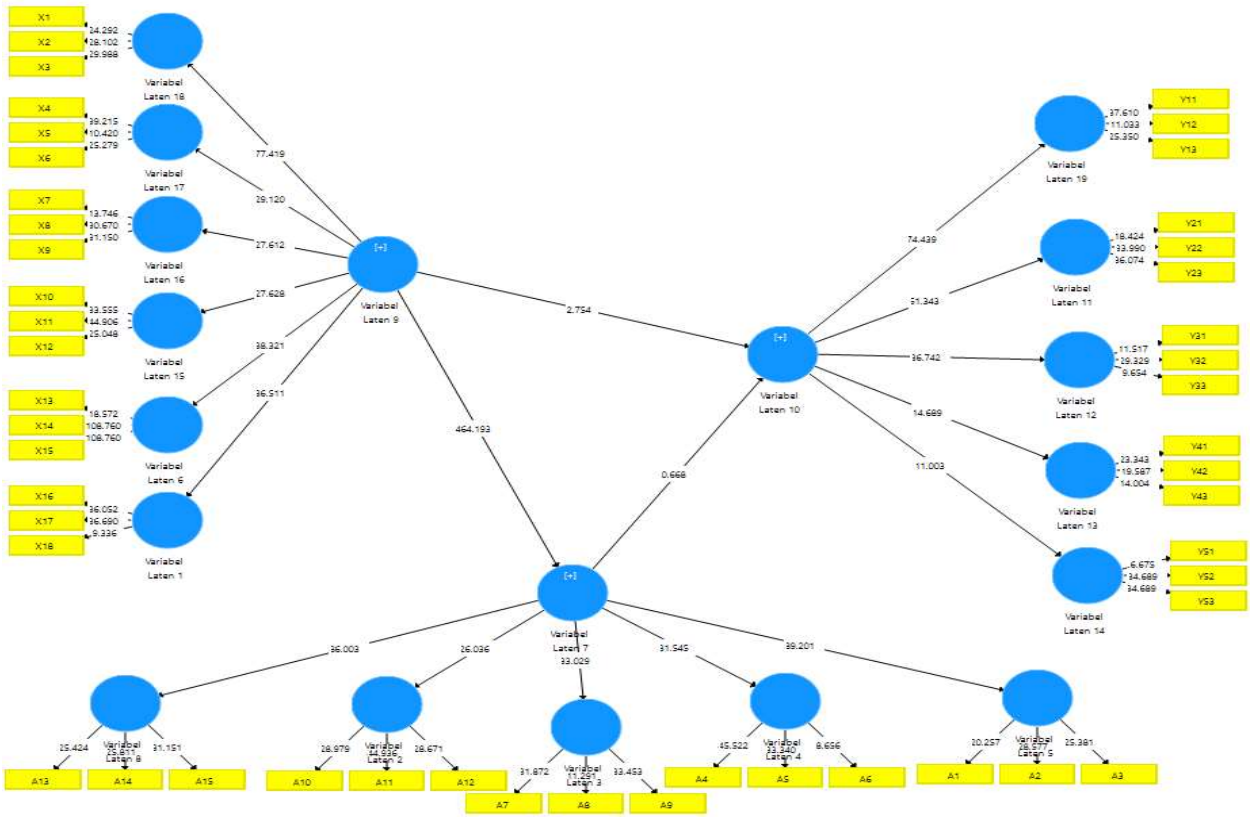


Figure 1. SEM PLS

## Data Analysis

This research employs Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) as its primary analytical framework, with the analysis being performed using SmartPLS version 4.0. The selection of this method is justified by its proficiency in modeling intricate causal pathways, its resilience when working with data that deviate from normality, and its appropriateness for the study's specific sample size (Hair et al., 2021). The analytical procedure was executed in two key phases: first, the assessment of the measurement (outer) model to confirm the constructs' validity and reliability, and second, the evaluation of the structural (inner) model to test the proposed hypotheses between the variables.

## Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The measurement model, also referred to as the outer model, was analyzed to verify the validity and reliability of the indicators relative to their assigned latent variables. This evaluation was based on three primary metrics. To establish convergent validity, the analysis utilized factor loadings (with a threshold > 0.70) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.50). While most indicator loadings were satisfactory, a small number registering marginally below the cutoff were preserved because of their foundational importance to the theoretical model. Next, discriminant

validity was verified by applying the Fornell-Larcker criterion, confirming that each construct's square root of AVE was greater than its correlations with all others, and by ensuring all Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios were under the acceptable limit of 0.90. Finally, the model's internal consistency was confirmed by calculating Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, with values for all constructs surpassing the recommended benchmark of 0.70, denoting adequate reliability for subsequent analysis of the structural mode

**Table 3**. Outer Model Results

| Construct | Indicator | Loading Factor | AVE | CR | Information |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HR Management (X1) | 6 Indicator | 0,77 – 0,86 | 0,62 | 0,89 | Valid & Reliabel |
| Digital Talent Management (X2) | 5 Indicator | 0,80 – 0,87 | 0,65 | 0,91 | Valid & Reliabel |
| Organizational Competitiveness (Y) | 5 Indicator | 0,76 – 0,92 | 0,66 | 0,92 | Valid & Reliabel |

Source: Data processed by author, 2025

All item loadings surpassed the 0.70 benchmark, confirming that every indicator effectively represents its intended construct. Furthermore, with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50 and Composite Reliability (CR) scores above 0.70, the results affirm that the model has successfully achieved both convergent validity and high internal consistency. Therefore, the measurement (outer) model is deemed robust and appropriate for advancing to subsequent stages of analysis

**Model Struktural (Inner Model)**

The structural (inner) model was evaluated to examine the hypothesized causal pathways between the latent constructs. This assessment included the coefficient of determination ($R^2$) to measure the model's explanatory power. The obtained $R^2$ value of 0.67 falls within the moderate-to-strong range, indicating that the exogenous variables collectively account for a substantial portion of the variance in the endogenous construct..

**Table 4**. Inner Model Results

| Path Relationships | Path Coefficient | T-Statistics | P-Value | $R^2$ (endogenous) | $Q^2$ | Information |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X1 → Y | 0,38 | 6,12 | 0,000 | | | Signifikan |
| X2 → Y | 0,42 | 7,45 | 0,000 | 0,67 | 0,49 | Signifikan |
| X1 + X2 → Y | 0,71 | 12,38 | 0,000 | | | Significantly stronger |

Source: Data processed by author, 2025

As presented in Table 4, the $R^2$ value of 0.67 signifies that 67% of the variance in the Organizational Competitiveness construct (Y) is explained by the combined effect of HR Management (X1) and Digital Talent Management (X2), which is categorized as strong (Hair et al., 2021). Furthermore, a $Q^2$ value of 0.49, which is greater than zero, confirms the model's

predictive relevance for the endogenous construct. The path coefficient analysis reveals that both independent constructs exert a significant positive influence on Organizational Competitiveness, with Digital Talent Management ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$) demonstrating a slightly stronger effect than HR Management ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$). The synergistic integration of these two variables yields a substantially greater combined effect ($\beta = 0.71$), providing strong support for the third hypothesis (H3).

### Test Path Coefficient and Significance

The path coefficient test was carried out to determine the direction and magnitude of influence between latent variables according to the research hypothesis. The test was carried out through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resampling on SmartPLS 4.0. The criteria for hypothesis acceptance were **a t-statistical value > 1.96** and **a p-value < 0.05** at a significance level of 5%.

**Table 5.** Path Coefficient Test Results

| Hipotesis | Jalur | Coephyses (β) | T-Statistics | P-Value | Information |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | HR Management (X1) → Organizational Competitiveness (Y) | 0,38 | 6,12 | 0,000 | Signifikan |
| H2 | Digital Talent Management (X2) → Organizational Competitiveness (Y) | 0,42 | 7,45 | 0,000 | Signifikan |
| H3 | X1 & X2 Integration → Organizational Competitiveness (Y) | 0,71 | 12,38 | 0,000 | Significantly stronger |

Source: Data processed by author, 2025

Path analysis outcomes demonstrate a significant positive effect of Human Resource Management (X1) on Organizational Competitiveness (Y), supported by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.38$ ($p < 0.05$). This implies that well-executed HRM functions including recruitment, training, compensation systems, and performance evaluation contribute substantially to the competitive advantage of public sector institutions. These findings align with the work of Jiang et al. (2019), which underscores the significant contribution of HRM methodologies to enhanced organizational outcomes. Correspondingly, Digital Talent Management (X2) also displayed a significant positive relationship with Organizational Competitiveness (Y) ($\beta = 0.42$; $p < 0.05$). This validates the notion that approaches focused on attracting, cultivating, and retaining digital talent are fundamental for developing a responsive and forward-thinking bureaucracy equipped to succeed in the digital age (Vargas et al., 2023).

Critically, the combined effect of HRM and DTM manifested a more substantial impact on Organizational Competitiveness ($\beta = 0.71$; $p < 0.05$). This underscores the conclusion that achieving digital transformation within bureaucracies relies not only on initiatives for digital talent but is also contingent upon a robust underpinning of traditional HRM frameworks. Therefore, the collaborative interaction between HRM and DTM acts as a pivotal mechanism for advancing the enduring competitive strength of public organizations.

## Discussion

The analysis revealed that human resource management exerts a significant and positive influence on the competitiveness of public organizations ($\beta = 0.38$; $p < 0.05$). This demonstrates that professional HRM practices—ranging from rigorous recruitment, continuous training, equitable compensation systems, to objective performance evaluations—are capable of enhancing service quality, organizational adaptability, and innovation capacity. Such outcomes align with the conclusions of Ulrich and Dulebohn (2015), who emphasized that well-integrated HRM mechanisms substantially elevate organizational effectiveness by refining work processes and boosting employee motivation. Similarly, Collings and Cascio (2019) highlighted that strategic HRM in public institutions significantly contributes to service delivery performance, particularly through improving bureaucratic efficiency. Wright and McMahan (2011) further stressed that adaptive talent management skills are critical in reinforcing organizational agility, which represents a vital component of competitiveness in the contemporary era. Collectively, these findings reaffirm that HRM should not merely be perceived as an administrative support function, but rather as a strategic foundation in constructing sustainable competitive advantage.

The second hypothesis confirmed that digital talent management (DTM) has a positive and significant impact on the competitiveness of public organizations ($\beta = 0.42$; $p < 0.05$). This suggests that the effectiveness of bureaucracy in addressing digital disruptions is largely shaped by the organization's capability to identify, nurture, retain, and leverage individuals with digital expertise. These results resonate with the work of Ulrich and Dulebohn (2015), who demonstrated that DTM plays a pivotal role in enhancing innovation and organizational agility, enabling institutions to swiftly adapt to environmental shifts. In addition, Collings and Cascio (2019), in their study of the Malaysian telecommunications industry, provided evidence that DTM fosters performance improvements by advancing digital competencies and supporting the integration of emerging technologies. Harsch and Festing (2020) also argued that dynamic approaches to talent management promote agility, thereby creating avenues for innovation and responsiveness. In essence, DTM should not be regarded as a passing organizational trend, but as a crucial strategic pillar to strengthen competitiveness within the context of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0. From a practical perspective, this underscores the importance for local governments to invest in continuous development of civil servants' digital competencies while simultaneously creating robust retention mechanisms to preserve employees with critical expertise.

The third hypothesis is validated by the finding that the integration of HR management with digital talent management exerts a stronger effect on public sector organizational competitiveness ($\beta = 0.71$; $p < 0.05$) compared to the impact observed when each construct is tested individually. This indicates that solid conventional HRM practices serve as a critical foundation for the effectiveness of DTM, meaning both dimensions must operate in tandem to reinforce bureaucratic competitiveness. These results resonate with the conclusions of Guest (2018), who argued that HRM practices emphasizing employee engagement and well-being enhance the success of innovative HR strategies, including those driven by digital transformation. Likewise, Lengnick and Lengnick (2011) underscored that the effective adoption of DTM depends heavily on its alignment with existing HRM systems, since these systems provide the structural and cultural support required for new digital initiatives to thrive. Accordingly, this study contributes novel evidence that the synergy between HRM and DTM is central to achieving sustainable competitiveness within public organizations. The practical implication is that local governments must design integrative HR approaches that not only prioritize the development of

digital skills among civil servants but also strengthen the traditional HRM framework, which remains the essential backbone of bureaucratic digital transformation.

## Conclusions and Suggestions

The findings of this study demonstrate that the competitiveness of public organizations is shaped not merely by the adoption of digital technologies, but more fundamentally by the quality of human resource management. Evidence indicates that HRM positively strengthens organizational competitiveness through enhanced employee competence, motivation, and engagement. This role is complemented by the significant contribution of digital talent management, which positions digital expertise as a critical strategic asset in addressing the demands of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0. Moreover, the integration of conventional HRM practices with digital talent management produces the most substantial effect, as this combination fosters synergy between established structural foundations and dynamic digital capabilities. Collectively, these results highlight that regional bureaucracies, including those in Toraja, can only achieve sustainable competitiveness when human resources are managed through an integrative and forward-looking approach.

From a practical standpoint, this study suggests that local governments must treat digitalization not as a stand-alone technological initiative, but as a holistic strategy for strengthening human resource capacity. Continuous training and development initiatives that integrate digital proficiency with managerial skills are essential to ensure employees perform effectively in an evolving environment. At the same time, conventional HRM practices—covering recruitment, performance evaluation, and compensation systems—must be reinforced as the groundwork for successful digital talent management. In doing so, bureaucratic digital transformation will proceed more effectively, enabling the creation of a public sector that is adaptive, innovative, and capable of earning public trust through faster, accountable, and high-quality services.

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