

The Readiness of Print Media Human Resources in the Digital Transformation Process (A Case Study of Gorontalo Post)

Mohamad Caisar Ntoma^{1*}, Arifin Tahir², Sudarsono³

^{1,2,3} Program Studi Manajemen, Universitas Bina Mandiri Gorontalo

Abstract

Changes in people's information consumption behavior in today's digital era require print media outlets like Gorontalo Post to begin implementing adaptive work strategies. To support the implementation of these work adaptation strategies, several key elements are needed to make the necessary changes. One of these essential elements is the readiness of human resources (HR) to adapt to technological developments and the work Environment. This research uses a case study Analys and a qualitative approach to analyze Gorontalo Post's HR readiness to implement the digital transformation process, focusing on digital competency, attitudes toward change, and managerial support. Following participant observation, in-depth interviews, and internal document analysis, data were collected and analyzed using a SWOT analysis. The results indicate that Gorontalo Post's HR has the ability to adapt, but they still face obstacles such as limited digital competency, resistance to change, and a weak internal training strategy.

Keywords: Change management, Digital transformation, Gorontalo Post, HR, Print media.

Corresponding Author:

Mohamad caisar ntoma
(mohamadcaisarntoma02@gmail.com)

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1. Introduction

Gorontalo Post is the first and largest print media company in Gorontalo Province. Founded more than two decades ago, it was previously affiliated with the Jawa Pos National Network (JPNN) through its subsidiary, Manado Post, before ultimately joining the Indonesia News Network (INN) Group.

Although Gorontalo Post remains a reader reference in today's digital era, significant changes have been felt due to the development and advancement of information and communication technology. Increasingly widespread internet access and widespread use by the general public have shifted the relevance of print media in offering effective information. As a result, public behavior has begun to shift toward digital media, which offers easier access, faster information, and flexibility in presentation formats (Saradewi et al., 2025). A study revealed that Indonesians are currently more interested in online media (88%) and social media (68%). Meanwhile, television (57%) and print media (17%) are preferred by those with limited internet access (Newman et al., 2022).

This shift signals a serious challenge for print media in implementing adaptive management in the digital era. The significant decline in the number of print media outlets is reflected in data from the Press Companies Union (SPS). SPS Daily Chairperson Januar P Ruswita, in a Katadata article written by Rezza Aji Pratama, revealed that in 2022, the number of members decreased from 593 companies in 2021 to just 399 in 2022. (Pratama, 2023). This change has created fundamental pressures for print media, including the Gorontalo Post, requiring them to overhaul their business models toward user-driven multiplatform distribution to maintain relevance and competitiveness (Widagdhaprasana et al., 2024).

In the context of organizational management, digital transformation touches various aspects. The most crucial aspect is human resources (HR) preparedness in all aspects. Researchers Fadilah and Anshori (2025) stated that rapid changes in the digital technology era have pushed global companies to adapt in various areas, including HR management. Therefore, in general, a company's progress is largely determined by the quality of the human resources managing it. This requires careful planning in providing HR in the digital era (Putri et al., 2023). HR planning is an integral part of preparing a workforce that is adaptive to digital transformation. One of the main challenges in HR management in this era is the ability to adapt to change and overcome the uncertainty and fear that may arise (Tabina et al., 2024).

For companies to have superior and competent HR, their workforce must also possess digital competencies. Developing digital competencies is not only an individual need but also a strategic element that

directly impacts overall organizational performance (Nauli et al., 2025). By actively developing employees' digital competencies, companies will experience improved performance, as skilled human resources are able to develop independence and adapt to digital-based work processes (Nauli et al., 2025).

Not all organizations are well-prepared for the changes they face. Another challenge that needs to be addressed is the potential for resistance to change. Therefore, designing a digital transformation should not solely focus on technological implementation but should be viewed holistically as a change management process that considers psychological and social aspects within the organization. (Fauzi & Kusuma, 2025)

In management science, preparing human resources is a fundamental and strategic factor in determining the success of a digital transformation. As a local print media outlet, Gorontalo Post is facing the demands of this digital transformation, and it is necessary to analyze how employees' digital competencies, adaptability, and mindset respond to change.

2. Methods

Qualitative methods and a descriptive approach were used in this study. The research aims to describe or elaborate on a situation (Khairunnisa & Adisasmito, 2024), thus allowing for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of HR readiness occurring at Gorontalo Post. Information in this study was collected through observation and interviews, then reviewed through literature studies from various sources, such as published journals across disciplines and articles. Qualitative research is descriptive in nature and tends to use an inductive analysis approach (Rusdianti et al., 2022). Therefore, in this study, the process and meaning are based on a perspective that emphasizes qualitative subjects (Fadli, 2021). The data were then processed narratively and descriptively, focusing on a Management Science perspective. To obtain a comprehensive picture in identifying strengths and weaknesses, as well as challenges and threats, a SWOT analysis was used. This allows for measuring and understanding the existing characteristics of a company, including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that determine company performance (Mashuri & Nurjannah, 2020).

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the study show that the readiness of the Gorontalo Post organization in facing change is closely related to the aspects of competency, mindset and attitude of employees as well as managerial readiness, however there are several obstacles that influence the process of implementing change.

1. Competency Readiness

The competence of long-time employees at Gorontalo Post is unquestionable. Most have more than two years of work experience, providing employees with a solid understanding of the workload in their respective sections or divisions. For example, in the editorial division, Editor-in-Chief Jitro Paputungan acknowledged that because Gorontalo Post is the first and largest media outlet, most journalists are more senior than those in other, increasingly growing online media outlets. The long tenure of Gorontalo Post journalists demonstrates their steadfastness in their field. To support journalist professionalism, ensure news quality, and ensure compliance with proper work standards, the office has long implemented a massive initiative to have all journalists participate in the Journalist Competency Test (UKW) at various levels, from Junior, Middle, and Senior. Between 2018 and 2019, Gorontalo Post, still a member of the JPNN group, participated in national-level journalist training. This training focused on improving digital skills in preparation for the online media era.

According to HRD Manager Chisilia Noviasuti Aripin, the readiness of the Administration division emphasized that in supporting office policies, competency assessment is the most important aspect of every recruitment process. This is intended to align with the company's desire to have qualified and reliable human resources needed in the office environment. In addition to the recruitment stage, competency readiness in other divisions is also encouraged by participating in external training conducted by government and private institutions or agencies. This indirectly increases skills and understanding in adapting to any changes. For example, the most recent implementation of tax reporting using the Coretax system.

Circulation Manager Yusuf Saleh, in preparation for office policy changes, integrated the use of digital platforms in addition to print newspapers, implemented a service optimization policy. This was achieved by prioritizing timely, safe, and friendly delivery of printed newspapers to customers. This was done to ensure print newspapers were distributed first before online and digital versions were released.

2. Mindset and Attitude Readiness

Changes in adapting to the digital era were increasingly felt in early 2025. This coincided with Gorontalo Post's numerous improvements. These changes were not simply implemented unilaterally by the office.

Whenever there were improvements, system enhancements, or new policies, the office remained open and, as a form of transparency, sought feedback on the changes. This was done through regular monthly and/or annual meetings. However, along with the motivation to learn about change, there was also a growing resistance to change. This typically occurs in positions that are used to the comfort of old work patterns but suddenly change due to policy changes. Beyond the comfort factor with old work patterns, there is also a tendency to continue old work patterns as they are crucial to supporting production and business models. As stated by Circulation Manager Yusuf Saleh. The division didn't implement technological changes for its distribution control system because it aligned with the office's business strategy. The circulation department maintained a manual work pattern, aiming to outperform the best-selling print newspaper. If they fully adapted to the editorial department's distribution of news using multiple digital platforms, the newspaper wouldn't sell. Likewise, HR Manager Chisilia Noviasuti Aripin fully delegated the implementation of digital changes to each division. This demonstrates HR's flexibility, granting each division authority based on its mindset.

3. Managerial Readiness Aspect

This aspect of managerial readiness is not fully implemented. Some demonstrate a commitment to change, while others have policies that have not been fully implemented structurally to address change (Setiawan & Arti, 2024). An interview with HRD Manager Chisilia Noviasuti Aripin revealed that her department lacks a standardized recruitment process. HRD is positioned in the middle, meaning all policies are still dependent on the board of directors' decisions. HRD also does not establish standardized standards for each division, so the recruitment process is always adjusted to each division's policies. Currently, there is not much internal training. This aligns with Editor-in-Chief Jitro Papatungan's admission that his division has recently been involving more journalists in external training conducted outside the company. Meanwhile, performance management has not implemented a technology-based system, resulting in in-depth evaluations.

4. Barriers

The biggest barrier to readiness for change within a company is budgetary issues. Although few people address the issue of budgeting due to its perceived sensitivity, many agree that budgeting is a key issue in supporting organizational readiness for change. Similarly, resistance to change is still present. Meanwhile, the availability of digital infrastructure is often another factor in companies. However, at Gorontalo Post, digital infrastructure is readily available and fully supported by the company.

The research findings indicate that Gorontalo Post's human resources possess basic digital skills and sufficient motivation, but some employees still display resistance to change, as well as limited company budgets for internal training related to digital change readiness. This aligns with Soliha & Atmaja (2022) view that HR management is the practice of managing human resources to improve overall organizational performance. This view supports Mathis & Jackson's theory that HR management is the design of formal systems within an organization to ensure the effective use of human resources in achieving business goals.

In terms of organizational readiness for change, Armenakis and Hariss' theory, which emphasizes the importance of readiness for change, which includes beliefs and positive attitudes, in ensuring successful change implementation, has not been fully implemented. This is due to a lack of budget support and minimal internal training. The role of HRD managers in facilitating the Digital Transition should always ensure it runs effectively because as a facilitator they must design digital-based training programs to shape employee motivation to become agents of change and become a bridge between board policies and field responses. This is in accordance with the theory of digital transformation in media management presented by Saradewi et al. (2025). Change is not easy, especially having to adjust the work rhythm, especially for the generation of senior journalists who are used to newspaper work schedules.

To understand Gorontalo Post's readiness to face various forms of change, a SWOT analysis strategy was used in this study to measure the extent of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced. This analysis allows for the identification of internal aspects of Gorontalo Post that can support or hinder, as well as external potential that can be utilized or need to be watched out for.

Strengths

- Solid HR competencies
Senior journalists with more than two years of experience and active participation in the Journalist Competency Test (UKW) demonstrate professionalism and work maturity.
- Commitment to external training
Employees from various divisions regularly participate in external training, including digital training and the Coretax tax system, which strengthens adaptation to technological changes.
- Digital infrastructure readiness

Unlike many other companies, Gorontalo Post has established adequate digital infrastructure to support the transformation.

- Adaptive customer service policy

The circulation division implemented a friendly and timely service strategy to maintain print newspaper customer loyalty before the digital content was released.

Weaknesses

- Lack of standardized managerial standards

The internal recruitment and training processes are not yet systematically structured. HR still relies on board decisions and lacks cross-divisional SOPs.

- Performance management is not yet technology-based

Performance evaluations do not yet use a digital system, resulting in in-depth and inaccurate evaluation results.

- Resistance to Change

Some employees show resistance to change, especially those who are comfortable with old work patterns or maintain traditional business strategies.

Opportunities

- Digital transformation of local media

The digital era opens up opportunities for Gorontalo Post to expand its reach through multiple platforms, increasing its competitiveness with emerging online media.

- External training partnerships

Collaboration with national training institutions and government/private agencies can continuously strengthen human resource competencies.

- Strengthening technology-based managerial systems

- Implementing digital-based HR and performance management systems can improve efficiency and accuracy in decision-making.

Threats

- Budgetary Constraints

Budgetary issues are a major obstacle to supporting organizational readiness for change, particularly for internal training and development.

- Aggressive digital media competition

More flexible and rapidly developing online media could threaten Gorontalo Post's position if they do not adapt comprehensively.

- Strategic Dissonance between Divisions

Differences in approaches to change between divisions (for example, between editorial and circulation) have the potential to lead to strategic fragmentation and hinder digital integration.

Based on the SWOT analysis above, we can formulate a strategic analysis that can serve as a guide in preparing Gorontalo Post for transformation in the digital era. These include:

Analysis and Strategy	Strategy Strength Opportunities (Kekuatan - Peluang)	Strategy Weaknesses Opportunities (kekuatan – peluang)	Strategy Strengths – Threats (internal - Eksternal)	Strategy Weaknesses – threats (Kelemahan – Ancaman)
1	Human resource competencies that have been tested through experience and training can be optimized to support the expansion of digital multiplatform content, thereby increasing the competitiveness of local media in the era of digital transformation.	Irregularities in the managerial system can be corrected through collaboration with professional training institutions, which play a role in developing cross-divisional standard operating procedures.	Existing digital infrastructure can be utilized to accelerate the process of adapting to the dynamics of digital media, thereby reducing the risk of being left behind by more flexible competitors.	Developing cross-divisional standard operating procedures is a crucial step in preventing strategic disintegration, particularly in the face of digital transformation demands.
2	Information technology infrastructure readiness enables organizations to establish strategic partnerships with external training institutions, to strengthen their capacity to adapt to technological changes.	Resistance to change can be minimized through participatory and sustainable technology-based training, thereby creating a more adaptive work culture.	HR professionalism can serve as social capital in unifying strategies across divisions, preventing policy fragmentation and strengthening digital integration.	Selective and priority-based budget allocation allows organizations to continue to implement relevant internal training, even under limited financial conditions.
3	Customer service strategies that have been adapted to print media can be integrated into digital platforms, as an effort to maintain customer loyalty while expanding audience reach.	The implementation of a digital-based performance evaluation system is a solution to the weaknesses in performance measurement which has been manual and inaccurate.	An efficient and responsive customer service strategy can be implemented despite budget constraints, by prioritizing cost-effective yet effective approaches.	Building a work culture that is open to innovation and change can be done through intensive internal communication and a transformative leadership approach.

Table 1. Analysis & Strategy

Source: processed by researchers 2025

4. Conclusion

Gorontalo Post's human resources are at a level that is quite ready to face digital transformation, this is supported by employee motivation to learn, openness to accept change despite some resistance, technological infrastructure facilities are very supportive, but obstacles are budget availability and inadequate internal training programs. The implication is that management needs to further optimize the HR development strategy in a structured manner. Suggestions for increasing the frequency of digital training, intensifying recruitment of digital talent. Work systems supported by the implementation of digital technology.

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