

Digital Transformation of Strategic Human Resource Management in Kosovo Small and Medium Enterprises

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Abstract

Research Originality: This study provides the first two-wave longitudinal panel evidence on cognition-based digital human resource adoption in Kosovo's small and medium enterprises, revealing the temporal and regional boundary conditions that cross-sectional national studies fail to detect.

Research Objectives: The research analyzes how managers' perceptions of digital tools drive actual technology use in small and medium enterprises and, through it, employee productivity, retention, recruitment quality, and organizational performance across two pandemic phases.

Research Method: A matched panel of 248 human resource managers was surveyed at the onset of the pandemic (2020) and during the stabilization phase (2021); the data were analyzed using multi-group structural equation modeling.

Empirical Results: Perceived usefulness and ease of use drive adoption at both waves; adoption improves all strategic outcomes, although retention benefits emerge only over time and the ease-of-use mechanism weakens in peripheral regions.

Implications: Returns on digital investment compound over time; policy should combine infrastructure investment with usability-oriented training in lagging regions.

Keywords:

human capital management; remote work; employee retention, crisis management; technology acceptance, organizational agility.

How to Cite:

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INTRODUCTION

The intersection of information technology and strategic human resource management has generated one of the most productive debates in contemporary management scholarship. Scholars continue to disagree on whether digital tools function as a purely operational efficiency mechanism or as a genuinely strategic lever that can reshape organizational human capital outcomes (Strohmeier, 2020; Alomari, 2023). This debate has intensified for small and medium enterprises, which face limited financial resources, leaner human resource departments, and narrower technology investment capacity, yet must compete in increasingly digitalized markets (Millar et al., 2017; Oles, 2024). The proposition that electronic human resource systems constitute strategic infrastructure rather than administrative shortcuts has only grown in relevance as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and workforce analytics have become accessible even to resource-constrained organizations (Tambe et al., 2019; Vrontis et al., 2022). What remains underexplored, however, is how these dynamics unfold in transitional economies whose institutional conditions, digital infrastructure, and organizational capabilities diverge substantially from those assumed by mainstream models developed in advanced economies.

The COVID-19 pandemic served as an unprecedented real-time stress test for technology-driven human resource management, compressing years of projected digital transformation into weeks. Organizations worldwide were forced to reconfigure recruitment, performance management, training, and employee engagement entirely through digital channels (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Collings et al., 2021). Research from this period documents a fundamental restructuring of the workforce through remote working, virtual onboarding, and artificial-intelligence-based candidate screening (Johnson et al., 2016; Tambe et al., 2019). For Kosovo's small and medium enterprise sector, this transition was particularly complex. Although internet penetration reached 96 percent by 2021 (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2021), the business environment simultaneously faced uneven digital skills distribution, limited institutional support for digital human resource adoption, and a labor market still maturing in data-driven people management (Dragusha et al., 2019; Dragusha & Prenaj, 2021). The pandemic therefore exposed both the latent potential and the structural vulnerabilities of Kosovo's enterprises in strategically integrating technology and human resources.

A central current in this literature emphasizes strategic alignment as the determinative condition for realizing value from human resource technology. Marler and Parry (2016) demonstrated that internet-based human resource systems enable organizations to respond proactively to talent shortages and market shifts, particularly benefiting smaller firms that lack scale advantages. Al-Alawi et al. (2023) argued that human resource practices must be tightly coupled with human capital strategy and underpinned by deliberate technological choices rather than adopted reactively. More recent evidence reinforces this alignment imperative: Ruiz et al. (2024) show that firms capture strategic value from digital human resource systems only when technology deployment is deliberately integrated with human capital strategy, rather than bolted on reactively, which produces poor user adoption and functional silos when it is not. In Kosovo, where technology

budgets are limited and returns on investment must be demonstrable, this alignment challenge is particularly acute (Dragusha & Prenaj, 2021).

This study approaches the problem through the Technology Acceptance Model, which holds that adoption decisions are determined primarily by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which shape behavioral intention and, in turn, actual technology use (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). The model remains the most extensively validated account of technology adoption in organizational research (Venkatesh et al., 2016; Amoako et al., 2023). Choosing this lens over the more commonly deployed resource-based view represents a deliberate theoretical reorientation: whereas the resource-based view treats technology as a firm-level asset whose value derives from scarcity and inimitability (Barney & Mackey, 2016), the Technology Acceptance Model locates the mechanism of value creation in individual managerial cognition, which is appropriate given that human resource managers constitute the unit of analysis in this study. The dynamic capabilities perspective complements this framing by interpreting crisis-period digitalization as a process of sensing threats, seizing opportunities, and reconfiguring internal resources (Teece, 2018).

A further strand of scholarship foregrounds the organizational and cultural preconditions that determine whether technology investments translate into strategic outcomes. Okatta et al. (2024) argue that organizations must cultivate an information culture of data literacy and evidence-based decision-making as a prerequisite for strategically leveraging workforce analytics. Khalaif et al. (2026) demonstrate that organizational culture is a critical mediating variable in crisis management, shaping morale, cohesion, and the achievability of strategic goals during disruption. Groysberg et al. (2018) show that rigid, hierarchical cultures disproportionately struggled to implement remote work, while cultures characterized by psychological safety navigated digital transitions more successfully; they also warn that over-standardized digital systems risk eroding the informal interactions that sustain creativity. Remote arrangements expand flexibility but introduce risks of isolation and burnout that human resource professionals must actively manage (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Vrontis et al., 2022). Digital transformation, in Rogers's (2016) terms, compels organizations to rethink their competitive logics and talent strategies, which is precisely the reconfiguration forced upon Kosovo's enterprises during the pandemic.

Against this background, the study's contribution can be positioned precisely. Three gaps motivate it. First, evidence on technology-driven strategic human resource management comes overwhelmingly from large firms in advanced economies, and its conclusions travel poorly to smaller, resource-constrained enterprises in transitional, post-conflict settings. Second, the field's dominant cross-sectional designs cannot establish whether technology adoption temporally precedes gains in human resource outcomes, nor how those relationships evolve as adoption matures. Third, national-level samples obscure whether the adoption mechanism operates uniformly across sub-national regions that differ sharply in digital infrastructure. The novelty of the study follows directly from addressing these gaps together: it provides the first two-wave longitudinal panel evidence on cognition-based digital human resource adoption in a Western Balkans

economy, it captures within-manager change between the acute and consolidation phases of the pandemic, and it tests the regional invariance of the mechanism across all seven administrative regions of Kosovo, a question aggregate national samples cannot answer. Accordingly, the study pursues three objectives: (1) to analyze how managers' perceptions of usefulness and ease of use drive actual technology use in Kosovo's small and medium enterprises; (2) to estimate the effect of that use on employee productivity, retention, recruitment quality, and organizational performance across two pandemic phases; and (3) to test whether these mechanisms are stable over time and across regions, to derive actionable implications for managers and policymakers.

METHODS

The data were collected from human resource managers and senior executives of legally registered small and medium enterprises operating across Kosovo's seven administrative centers: Pristina, Mitrovica, Gjilan, Peja, Gjakova, Prizren, and Ferizaj. Sampling frames were constructed from the Kosovo Business Registration Agency database, and a stratified purposive strategy was employed to ensure the sample reflected the regional distribution of registered enterprises and the sectoral composition of the economy (manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, professional services, and other sectors). Eligible respondents were required to hold formal human resource management responsibilities, have direct decision-making involvement in technology adoption within their organization, and have been employed in the firm for at least twelve months so that they could report reliably on practices across both survey waves. Data were collected in two waves corresponding to distinct pandemic phases: Wave 1 (March–May 2020, the acute onset phase) yielded 301 respondents, and Wave 2 (March–June 2021, the post-peak stabilization phase) yielded 248 matched respondents, an attrition rate of 17.6 percent. Attrition analysis indicated that dropout was random with respect to all demographic and substantive variables, and full-information maximum likelihood estimation was used to retain the complete first-wave sample. The matched panel exceeds the minimum sample size recommended for stable structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016).

All variables were measured with a structured self-administered questionnaire using five-point Likert scales. The acceptance constructs were adapted from established scales (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003) with wording adjusted to human-resource-specific technology contexts, and each outcome construct was measured with four to six reflective indicators. The instrument was translated from English into Albanian using a forward–backward protocol, evaluated for content validity by an expert panel, and piloted with 35 managers drawn from outside the final sampling frame; all retained scales showed adequate internal consistency. Table 1 summarizes the research variables, their operational definitions, and their roles in the model.

The research framework specifies that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use predict behavioral intention; behavioral intention predicts actual technology use; and actual technology use predicts the four strategic human resource outcomes, controlling

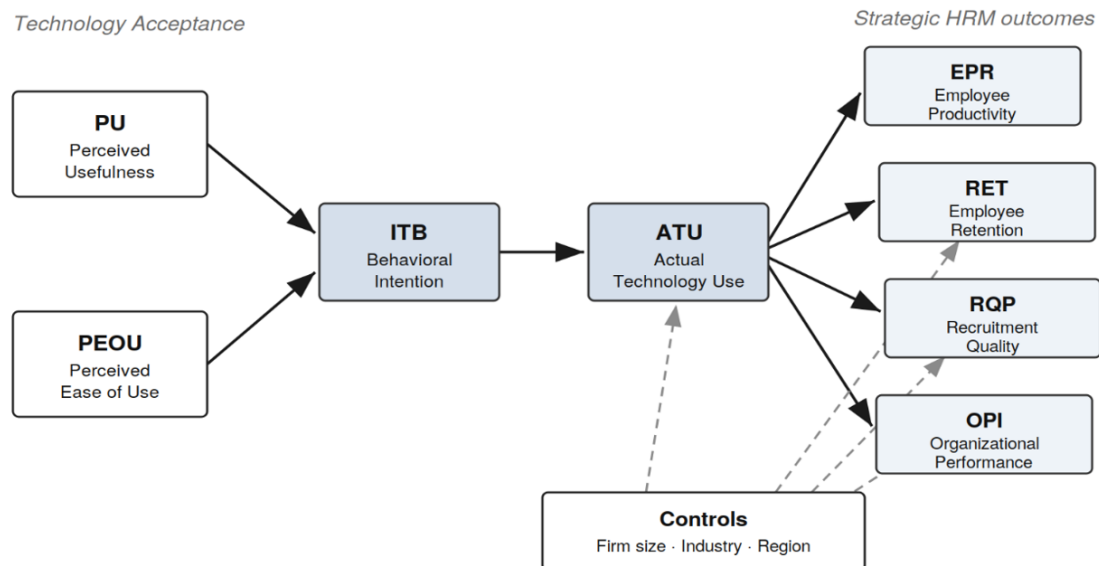
for firm size, sector, and region. Figure 1 presents this framework and the hypothesized relationships among the variables.

Table 1. Research Variables, Operational Definitions, and Roles in the Model

Code	Construct	Operational Definition	Role	Wave
PU	Perceived Usefulness	Degree to which managers believe technology enhances job performance	Independent	T1 & T2
PEOU	Perceived Ease of Use	Degree to which digital tools are perceived as free of effort	Independent	T1 & T2
ITB	Behavioral Intention	Intention to adopt and sustain technology use in HR processes	Mediator	T1 & T2
ATU	Actual Technology Use	Self-reported frequency and breadth of technology use in daily HR tasks	Mediator	T1 & T2
EPR	Employee Productivity	Manager-rated workforce output quality and efficiency	Dependent	T1 & T2
RET	Employee Retention	Perceived ability to retain key talent through technology-enabled practices	Dependent	T1 & T2
RQP	Recruitment Quality	Perceived quality of technology-assisted candidate sourcing and selection	Dependent	T1 & T2
OPI	Organizational Performance	Overall improvement in HR service quality and firm-level outcomes	Dependent	T1 & T2
FS, IND, REG	Controls	Firm size (log employees), industry sector, and administrative region	Control	T1

Note. T1 = Wave 1 (pandemic onset, 2020); T2 = Wave 2 (post-peak stabilization, 2021).
Source: Authors.

Figure 1. Research Framework Linking Technology Acceptance to Strategic HRM Outcomes



Source: Authors.

All estimates were obtained using structural equation modeling in R with the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012) and a maximum likelihood estimator robust to non-normality. The analytical sequence proceeded in four steps. First, we conducted confirmatory factor

analysis separately for each wave, assessing convergent validity through average variance extracted and composite reliability, discriminant validity through the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (Henseler et al., 2015), and common method bias through the single-factor and unmeasured-latent-factor procedures (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Second, we tested longitudinal measurement invariance sequentially (configural, metric, scalar) before any cross-wave comparison, following recommended panel-analysis practice (Kline, 2016). Third, we estimated the structural model at both waves and tested temporal change in the paths from technology use to the outcomes with a multi-group model using the waves as groups. Fourth, we tested regional stability of the adoption mechanism with a multi-group model across the seven administrative regions, and estimated indirect effects with 2,000-sample bootstrapped confidence intervals. We evaluated model fit against conventional thresholds for the normed chi-square, comparative fit index, Tucker–Lewis index, root mean square error of approximation, and standardized root mean square residual (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main findings of this research can be stated at the outset. First, managerial perceptions drive adoption: usefulness judgments dominate ease-of-use judgments in shaping intention to use digital tools, and intention consistently translates into actual use in both pandemic phases. Second, actual technology use improves employee productivity, recruitment quality, and overall organizational performance from the acute phase onward, whereas the retention benefit emerges only in the second wave, revealing a delayed maturation effect. Third, the strategic payoff of technology use deepens over time, with the strengthening statistically confirmed for recruitment quality and overall performance. Fourth, the adoption mechanism is not geographically uniform: the ease-of-use pathway is weaker in the peripheral regions of Mitrovica and Ferizaj, where digital infrastructure is less developed. Taken together, the cognitive mechanisms through which technology adoption creates strategic human resource value prove broadly robust in this transitional economy, while displaying clear temporal and geographic boundary conditions.

The matched panel comprised 248 managers who completed both waves, distributed across the seven administrative centers roughly in proportion to the regional distribution of registered enterprises, with Pristina contributing the largest share. The sample skewed toward micro and small firms, and sectoral representation spanned retail and trade, professional services, manufacturing, hospitality, and other activities. Most respondents held ownership or executive positions, and average managerial tenure approached seven years, providing adequate variance to control for experiential differences. The demographic profile of the matched panel was consistent with the full first-wave sample, and attrition did not systematically disadvantage any region, sector, or firm-size category.

Before the structural analysis, we verified the psychometric adequacy of the measurement model. As Table 2 shows, the confirmatory factor analyses met the good-fit thresholds at both waves; all factor loadings, average variance extracted values, and

composite reliabilities exceeded their respective criteria, and every heterotrait–monotrait ratio fell below the discriminant validity ceiling. No single factor accounted for the majority of variance, indicating that common method bias does not critically compromise the findings. The sequential invariance tests established full scalar invariance across waves, meaning the same constructs were measured on the same metric at both time points and that cross-wave comparisons are meaningful.

Table 2. Measurement Model Quality and Longitudinal Invariance Summary

Indicator	Criterion	Wave 1	Wave 2
Normed chi-square (χ^2/df)	≤ 3.00	2.31	2.18
Comparative fit index (CFI)	≥ 0.95	.96	.97
Tucker–Lewis index (TLI)	≥ 0.95	.95	.96
RMSEA	≤ 0.06	.051	.049
SRMR	≤ 0.08	.055	.052
Standardized loadings (range)	≥ 0.60	.62–.84	.64–.86
Average variance extracted (range)	≥ 0.50	.51–.67	.52–.67
Composite reliability (minimum)	≥ 0.70	> .80	> .80
HTMT ratio (maximum)	< 0.85	.79	.77
Largest single-factor variance	< 50%	22.4%	21.8%
Metric invariance (ΔCFI)	$\geq -.010$		–.007
Scalar invariance (ΔCFI)	$\geq -.010$		–.009

Note. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; HTMT = heterotrait–monotrait ratio; ΔCFI = change in comparative fit index relative to the preceding invariance model. Thresholds follow Hair et al. (2019) and Kline (2016).

Source: Authors.

Table 3 presents the structural results, and the text focuses on their meaning. Perceived usefulness emerged as the strongest driver of the intention to adopt digital tools at both waves, with perceived ease of use exerting a positive but clearly smaller influence. Intention translated reliably into actual use, and this translation strengthened in the second wave as pandemic conditions persisted and use became routinized. Actual technology use, in turn, significantly improved employee productivity, recruitment quality, and overall organizational performance at both waves. The single exception concerned retention: during the acute onset phase, technology use had no detectable effect on the ability to retain key talent, but by the stabilization phase this relationship had become both significant and substantial. The bootstrapped mediation analysis confirmed that usefulness perceptions influence the strategic outcomes through the sequential chain of intention and actual use for nearly all outcome–wave combinations; the sole first-wave retention pathway is interpreted with caution given its non-significant direct component.

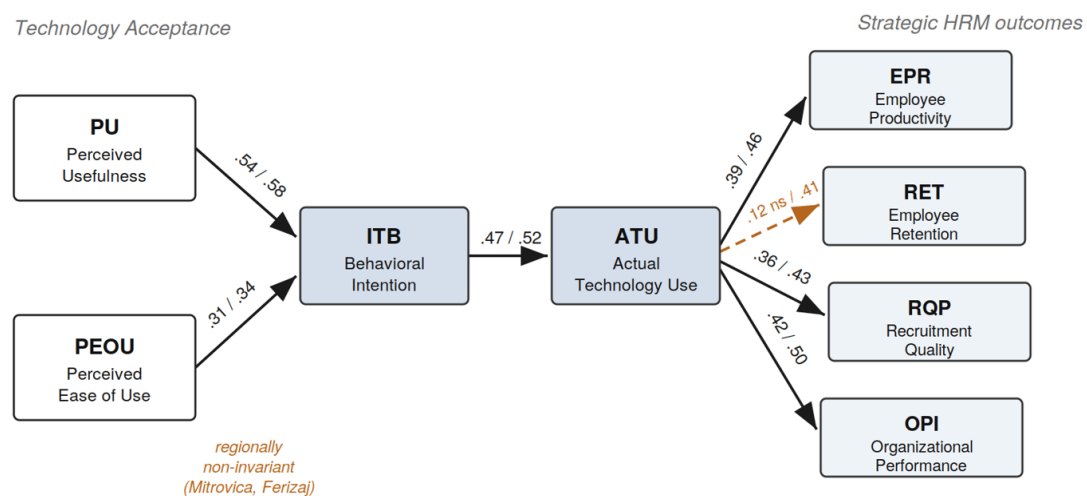
Figure 2 summarizes the estimated structural model, reporting the standardized path coefficients at both waves and making visible the two boundary conditions of the mechanism: the delayed emergence of the retention effect and the regional non-invariance of the ease-of-use pathway.

Table 3. Standardized Structural Path Coefficients at Both Waves and Temporal Comparison

Structural Path	Wave 1 β (p)	Wave 2 β (p)	Change Test (p)	Interpretation
PU to ITB	.54 (<.001)	.58 (<.001)	—	Confirmed at both waves
PEOU to ITB	.31 (<.001)	.34 (<.001)	—	Confirmed at both waves
ITB to ATU	.47 (<.001)	.52 (<.001)	—	Confirmed at both waves
ATU to EPR	.39 (<.001)	.46 (<.001)	+.07 (.071)	Confirmed; temporal gain not significant
ATU to RET	.12 (.182)	.41 (<.001)	+.29 (.054)	Not confirmed at Wave 1; confirmed at Wave 2
ATU to RQP	.36 (<.001)	.43 (<.001)	+.07 (.012)	Confirmed; significant temporal strengthening
ATU to OPI	.42 (<.001)	.50 (<.001)	+.08 (.002)	Confirmed; significant temporal strengthening
PEOU to ITB across regions			$\Delta CFI = -.014$ (.031)	Non-invariant in Mitrovica and Ferizaj; remaining paths regionally invariant

Note. PU = perceived usefulness; PEOU = perceived ease of use; ITB = behavioral intention; ATU = actual technology use; EPR = employee productivity; RET = employee retention; RQP = recruitment quality; OPI = organizational performance. Coefficients are standardized with robust standard errors; the change test compares equality-constrained and freely estimated paths across waves. Bootstrapped indirect effects (2,000 resamples) excluded zero for all outcome-wave combinations except the Wave 1 retention pathway.

Source: Authors.

Figure 2. Empirical Results: Standardized Path Coefficients (Wave 1/Wave 2)

Source: Authors.

The multi-group comparison across waves indicates that the strategic payoff of technology use deepened over the pandemic, although selectively. The strengthening was statistically robust for recruitment quality and overall performance. In contrast, the increments for productivity and retention were directional. However, they did not reach conventional significance, the latter reflecting the non-significant first-wave baseline and larger estimation uncertainty during the acute phase. The regional multi-group analysis revealed that the pathway from ease-of-use perceptions to adoption intention operates differently in Mitrovica and Ferizaj than in the remaining five regions. In contrast, the

usefulness pathway, the intention-use link, and the outcome effects proved regionally stable. The adoption mechanism, in other words, is largely but not fully uniform across Kosovo's geography.

The dominance of usefulness over ease of use in shaping adoption intention is theoretically coherent and consistent with four decades of accumulated evidence on technology acceptance (Venkatesh et al., 2016; Amoako et al., 2023). The present study replicates this hierarchy in a human-resource-specific, crisis-induced adoption context. It shows that both perceptions strengthened between waves, indicating that managers who adopted digital tools under duress updated their judgments upward as operational familiarity grew. This pattern aligns with evidence on organizational learning during crisis digitalization (Shet et al., 2019; Vrontis et al., 2022) and with Al-Alawi et al.'s (2023) finding, from the Gulf region during the same period, that perceived value was the decisive driver of digital human resource transformation; the present results extend that conclusion to the Western Balkans. Convergent recent evidence supports this reading: in an emerging-economy public-sector setting, Amoako et al. (2023) likewise find that acceptance perceptions, rather than technical features alone, govern e-HRM implementation, and Priyashantha and Chandradasa's (2023) systematic review confirms perceived usefulness as the most consistent antecedent of e-HRM adoption across national contexts.

The smaller but persistent ease-of-use effect carries important practical weight in resource-constrained settings. Where human resource professionals have limited prior exposure to enterprise platforms, perceived complexity can inhibit adoption even when utility is recognized (Dragusha & Prenaj, 2021). The stable positive effect of ease-of-use perceptions on intention implies that investments in user-friendly interface design, onboarding support, and digital literacy training translate into measurable increases in adoption intention. This specifies a concrete implementation lever for owners of small firms with limited technology budgets and extends the strategic-alignment imperative documented in recent digital human resource research (Ruiz et al., 2024) from diagnosis to remedy.

The consistent effects of actual technology use on the strategic outcomes extend prior cross-sectional evidence (Marler & Parry, 2016; Bondarouk et al., 2017; Alomari, 2023) to a longitudinal, transitional-economy setting and demonstrate that technology-enabled value creation is not a one-time adoption dividend but a cumulative, temporally deepening process. The strongest effect at both waves concerned overall organizational performance, suggesting that digital human resource tools generate their most visible returns at the firm level, where gains in productivity, hiring, and retention compound into aggregate improvement. This pattern is consistent with recent multi-country evidence that a digital human resource strategy raises firm performance when technology is integrated with human capital strategy (Ruiz et al., 2024), and with findings that e-HRM improves organizational performance chiefly through mediating behavioral pathways rather than directly (Alomari, 2023), the same sequential logic captured here by the intention use outcome chain, as well as with evidence that workforce analytics reshape the strategic advisory capacity of the human resource function (Tambe et al., 2019; Okatta et al., 2024).

The delayed retention effect warrants particular attention. During the acute onset phase, widespread labor market disruption and involuntary workforce changes appear to have suppressed the retention-oriented benefits of digital tools; by the stabilization phase, digital performance management, continuous feedback platforms, and remote learning programs enabled firms to signal commitment to employee welfare and career progression, and the retention benefit became substantial. This employee-level maturation echoes Hu and Lan's (2024) evidence that digital human resource management improves performance chiefly by reshaping employees' psychological states over time, a process that the delayed retention effect observed here renders visible at the level of strategic outcomes. The trajectory is consistent with the argument that the pandemic forced human resource functions to manage paradoxical demands whose resolution required time and relational capital (Collings et al., 2021), and with evidence that employee adjustment and well-being were the binding constraints of the early crisis period (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). This implies that retention-oriented digital practices require an organizational learning period before their effects accumulate.

The selective temporal deepening of the outcome effects is well accounted for by the dynamic capabilities perspective (Teece, 2018): as firms moved from reactive digital improvisation to deliberate technology-enabled strategy, the capabilities most directly tied to outward-facing processes, namely recruitment and overall performance, matured first, while productivity and retention gains, which depend more heavily on sustained internal culture change, showed only directional improvement within the observation window. This interpretation resonates with the finding that organizations with prior digital infrastructure displayed superior resilience trajectories (Shet et al., 2019) and extends it by documenting the within-sample deepening of the relationship over time. Practically, the pattern implies that owners and policymakers who evaluate returns on digital investment solely at the point of adoption will substantially underestimate its long-run strategic value, a consideration directly relevant to post-pandemic recovery financing across the Western Balkans (Oles, 2024).

The regional non-invariance of the ease-of-use pathway is both a methodological caution and a theoretically informative result. Aggregate findings involving ease of use must be interpreted with care, because the mechanism linking usability perceptions to adoption intention is moderated by local infrastructure conditions, a nuance that purely national-level analyses would have missed. Substantively, the result identifies a dual barrier in peripheral centers: insufficient infrastructure and low perceived usability. Policy responses should therefore combine broadband and platform-access investment with usability-oriented interventions, including onboarding support, peer learning communities, and digital literacy training that reduce the perceived effort of adoption (Millar et al., 2017; Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2021). The cultural dimension reinforces this prescription: organizations whose cultures support openness and learning absorb digital transitions more readily (Groysberg et al., 2018; Khalaif et al., 2026), so regional programs should address capability and culture together, not infrastructure alone.

Three limitations qualify these findings and chart the agenda for future research. Causal inference, despite the longitudinal design, remains constrained by the absence of exogenous variation in adoption; quasi-experimental designs exploiting variation in subsidy access across regions would provide stronger identification. Reliance on self-reported perceptual measures introduces shared method-variance risks that procedural and statistical remedies can mitigate but not eliminate; triangulation with administrative records such as turnover logs and recruitment platform data is the natural next step. Finally, the two-wave design captures two snapshots rather than the full adoption trajectory, and the panel size constrained the power of the regional analysis for smaller centers; extended panels with larger regional subsamples, together with comparative multi-country studies across the Western Balkans, would clarify which findings reflect Kosovo-specific institutional conditions and which reflect universal adoption mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how managers' perceptions of digital tools influence technology adoption in Kosovo's small and medium enterprises (SMEs), how technology use affects strategic human resource outcomes during two pandemic phases, and whether these relationships remain stable over time and across regions. The findings addressed all three objectives. Managers' perceptions were the main driver of technology adoption. Perceived usefulness, and to a lesser extent perceived ease of use, influenced the intention to adopt digital tools, which consistently led to actual use in both pandemic phases. Technology use improved employee productivity, recruitment quality, and overall organizational performance from the early pandemic period. However, its positive effect on employee retention appeared only later, after firms had gained sufficient organizational learning and experience with digital performance management and remote employee development. The strategic benefits of digitalization also increased as firms moved from reactive responses to more deliberate digital strategies. Overall, the adoption process was similar across Kosovo, although weaker infrastructure in peripheral regions reduced the effect of perceived usability on adoption intentions.

Two main recommendations emerge. For managers and owners, digital HR investment should be viewed as a long-term strategic commitment rather than a one-time purchase. Digital tools should be supported by effective management practices, a learning-oriented organizational culture, structured onboarding, and digital-literacy training. Retention-related benefits should also be evaluated over time because they require organizational learning to develop. For policymakers, digitalization programs in peripheral regions should address both infrastructure and usability barriers. Investment in broadband and platform access should be combined with training, peer-learning networks, and vendor-supported onboarding. This integrated approach can help ensure that the benefits of digitalization are shared across Kosovo rather than concentrated in its most developed regions.

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