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Employee recruitment and selection strategies in the VUCA Era: A systematic literature review of practices and implementation in companies (2021–2025)

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ABSTRACT

Rapid changes in the business environment over the past few years have forced many organizations to rethink their employee recruitment and selection processes. This study reviews a range of publications from 2021 to 2025 using a systematic literature review approach to capture the main ideas shaping recruitment and selection practices during this period. Several recurring themes appear in the literature, including the shift toward competency-based assessments, growing reliance on digital tools, and ongoing efforts to maintain fairness and objectivity in evaluating candidates. The review suggests that recruitment and selection processes that remain flexible, especially those combining data-informed decision-making, technological support, and transparent procedures, tend to result in more accurate placement and stronger long-term performance. However, the increasing use of digital systems presents its own challenges, such as the need for HR capacity building and ethical concerns related to algorithmic transparency. Overall, this review provides a clearer picture of how recruitment and selection strategies have evolved in the VUCA era. The findings offer practical insights for organizations seeking to design HR policies that are responsive, ethical, and aligned with the goal of improving workforce quality in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: digitalization; employee selection; human resource management; recruitment; VUCA

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) is widely recognized as a strategic function that contributes directly to an organization's competitive advantage. From the perspective of the Resource-Based View (RBV), human capital is considered a unique and inimitable resource that can generate sustained performance when managed effectively. Recruitment and selection, as core HRM functions, are central to ensuring that organizations attract and appoint individuals whose competencies align with organizational needs and long-term goals.

In recent years, organizations have increasingly faced environments characterized by VUCA—volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Market conditions shift rapidly, regulatory frameworks evolve unpredictably, and job demands are becoming increasingly diverse. These dynamics require HRM systems that are efficient, agile, and adaptive. The concepts of HR agility and dynamic capabilities underscore the importance of designing recruitment and selection processes that enable organizations to respond quickly to change while maintaining workforce quality and resilience.

Simultaneously, the rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed recruitment and selection practices. Online platforms, automated screening systems, and predictive analytics now play significant roles in managing large applicant pools and improving decision-making accuracy (Society for Human Resource Management, 2024). However, these innovations also raise concerns about fairness, inclusivity, and algorithmic transparency, highlighting the need for HRM approaches that balance technological efficiency and humanistic values.

Despite the growing body of research, most existing studies remain fragmented, focusing on individual tools or isolated cases without integrating broader theoretical perspectives. Few attempts have been made to systematically examine how recruitment and selection strategies evolve under VUCA conditions, particularly regarding the interaction between digital HR transformation and person–job fit theory. This gap limits practitioners' ability to identify consistent approaches that work across diverse organizational contexts and industries.

This study addresses this gap by conducting a systematic literature review (2021–2025) and synthesizing recent findings to provide a clearer picture of recruitment and selection strategies in the VUCA era. By integrating theoretical insights with practical implications, this review aims to contribute to both scholarly understanding and organizational practice, offering guidance on how HR policies can remain responsive, ethical, and strategically aligned with workforce development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recruitment and selection are often discussed together in human resource management because both processes play a central role in determining who eventually joins an organization. In practice, these activities are not simply administrative steps; they shape the quality of people who enter the workplace and influence how well an organization can respond to its daily requirements. Recruitment focuses on reaching and attracting individuals who might be interested in a position, whereas selection involves choosing among those candidates based on their suitability for the job. Although the two processes serve different purposes, they are closely connected, and the effectiveness of one often depends on how well the other is performed.

2.1. Concepts of Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment is often understood as a strategic effort within human resource management to reach and attract people who may fit the qualifications needed by an organization (Mangkunegara, 2008). Instead of functioning as a single step, recruitment usually unfolds through several activities, such as planning the workforce needed, searching for potential applicants, and maintaining communication with candidates throughout the recruitment cycle (Simamora, 2006; Talenta, 2025). These activities help organizations ensure that a broad and relevant pool of applicants is aware of the opportunities offered.

Selection comes afterward, serving as the stage where organizations take a closer look at the applicants and determine who is most likely to succeed in a particular role. An effective selection process helps ensure that the chosen individuals possess the competencies, traits, and potential that align with the expectations of the job and the organization's goals (Sedarmayanti, 2014; Simamora, 2006). In many cases, selection is a crucial tool for improving the overall quality of human resources and reducing the risks associated with placing employees in roles that do not match their abilities.

2.2. Recruitment and Selection Strategies

Recruitment strategies describe how an organization positions itself to attract strong candidates to its workforce. These strategies may include enhancing employer branding, using technology-based tools such as Computer-Assisted Testing (CAT), and building and maintaining relationships with prospective applicants (Glory, 2024; Washillah et al., 2024). Regarding selection, organizations often rely on psychological tests, competency-based interviews, or assessment centers to gain a clearer and more objective understanding of an applicant's capabilities (Munawar et al., 2021; Gunawan & Muspawi, 2024).

The growing use of digital technologies and data analytics has expanded the possibilities for improving recruitment and selection. *The Society for Human Resource Management (2024)* notes that organizations incorporating predictive analytics and AI-based systems can make decisions more efficiently while reducing certain forms of bias. Similarly, Cappelli (2021), writing in the *Harvard Business Review*, highlights how agile and competency-focused approaches help organizations navigate an increasingly uncertain labor market. These developments suggest that recruitment and selection strategies are no longer merely administrative processes but evolving practices shaped by technological and market shifts.

2.3. Challenges of Recruitment and Selection in the VUCA Era

The VUCA era—marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity—creates several difficulties for organizations when they try to design recruitment and selection systems that truly work. Under such conditions, companies are expected to remain flexible and responsive to attract people who can cope with rapid shifts and uncertain work environments.

HR practices rooted in rigid, traditional procedures are no longer sufficient; organizations need more agile approaches supported by digital tools to remain relevant. Washillah et al. (2024) add that talent development in the digital era must also consider system adaptability and workforce readiness to move through ongoing changes. The growing use of digital tools in selection should still leave room for humane evaluation so that the process remains ethical and inclusive. Issues such as varying levels of digital literacy, resistance to cultural change, and unequal access to technology are real challenges that organizations must address when adopting modern recruitment and selection methods.

2.4. Review of Previous Studies

A wide range of earlier studies consistently shows that recruitment and selection practices directly influence employee quality and organizational performance. Structured recruitment strategies tend to produce higher-quality employees and greater efficiencies. While this finding is valuable, it primarily reflects contexts in which organizations have sufficient resources to implement structured systems. In contrast, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often face limitations in HR capacity, suggesting that the applicability of such structured approaches may vary across organizational types.

The growing role of digital solutions in improving candidate assessment accuracy, noting that technology accelerates the selection process. However, overreliance on algorithmic tools can introduce ethical risks, particularly bias and the exclusion of candidates with lower digital literacy. This tension between efficiency and fairness illustrates a central challenge in the digital transformation of HRM: while digitalization enhances speed and scalability, it may also exacerbate inequalities if it is not accompanied by ethical safeguards.

The importance of competency-based and transparent selection methods, which increase objectivity, strengthen decision-making, and reduce turnover, is highlighted. However, these studies often rely on cross-sectional data, limiting their ability to capture the long-term impact on workforce stability. Structured competency interviews improve validity and fairness, but their findings are based on controlled organizational settings, raising questions about their generalizability to more volatile environments.

Other studies have pointed to the consequences of weak selection practices. Aziz et al. (2017) show that poorly structured systems can lower job satisfaction and reduce productivity. While these insights are important, both studies are case-based and context-specific, which restricts their broader applicability. Handayani (2023) adds that transparent and meritocratic talent management fosters loyalty and motivation; however, her study does not fully address how transparency can be maintained in digitally mediated recruitment systems.

Taken together, these studies underline that recruitment and selection are not merely administrative tasks but are central predictors of organizational success. However, the literature reveals several gaps. First, most studies focus on large organizations, leaving SMEs underexplored despite their significant roles in many economies. Second, empirical evidence remains limited regarding how digital recruitment systems balance efficiency with inclusivity, particularly in contexts with uneven technological infrastructure. Third, few studies adopt longitudinal designs, which are necessary to understand the sustained impact of recruitment and selection strategies on employee performance and retention. Addressing these gaps would significantly advance both theoretical and practical HRM knowledge.

The following table presents a synthesis of the key findings from previous studies that form the conceptual foundation of this research.

Table 1. Synthesized Literature on Recruitment and Selection Strategies in the VUCA Era

No.	Author(s) & Year	Study Focus	Key Findings	Practical Implications
1.	Society for Human Resource Management (2024)	AI and predictive analytics in selection	AI improves objectivity and efficiency but requires ethical oversight	Implementation of data-driven and ethically guided selection systems
2.	Washillah et al. (2024)	Talent development strategies in the digital era	Flexible systems and adaptive HR are vital in VUCA contexts	Designing agile and responsive recruitment systems
3.	Zulkarnaen & Wendra (2022)	E-recruitment and initial selection efficiency	Automated screening saves time and costs	Optimization of online systems for early-stage selection

Table 1 synthesizes three recent studies on recruitment and selection strategies in the VUCA era. Collectively, these studies show that recruitment and selection are increasingly shaped by digitalization, AI, predictive analytics, and e-recruitment systems. The findings indicate that technology can improve efficiency, speed, and objectivity in early-stage screening and talent identification, while adaptive HR systems are important for responding to volatile and rapidly changing environments. Simultaneously, the table suggests that ethical oversight remains necessary, particularly when organizations adopt AI-driven and data-based selection tools. Overall, the literature highlights the growing need for agile, technology-enabled, and ethically guided recruitment systems in the field.

2.5. Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Thinking

The conceptual foundation of this study rests on the interaction between recruitment strategies, selection techniques, and overall human resource quality. To strengthen its theoretical depth, two perspectives are integrated: Person–Job Fit Theory and Digital HR Transformation. Together, these frameworks provide a lens through which to understand how organizations can design recruitment and selection systems that remain effective in volatile and uncertain environments.

The Person–Job Fit Theory emphasizes the importance of aligning individual characteristics, such as skills, values, and personality, with the requirements of specific roles. When recruitment and selection

succeed in achieving this fit, organizations benefit from higher productivity, stronger employee commitment, and reduced turnover. However, in the VUCA era, person–job fit must be understood as dynamic rather than static. Employees are expected to not only match current job demands but also adapt to evolving roles and organizational changes. This perspective highlights the need for recruitment systems that prioritize adaptability and long-term alignment.

The Digital HR Transformation perspective underscores the role of technology in reshaping HR practices. Digital platforms, predictive analytics, and AI-supported systems enable organizations to process large applicant pools more efficiently, reduce administrative burdens, and improve the accuracy of candidate-job matching. However, these tools also introduce ethical challenges, including algorithmic bias, unequal access to technology, and the risk of oversimplifying human attributes. Therefore, digital HR must be implemented with safeguards that preserve fairness, inclusivity, and transparency.

By integrating these two perspectives, the framework proposes that effective recruitment and selection in the VUCA era requires a balance between technological efficiency and humanistic values. Digital HR tools can enhance the precision of person–job fit assessments; however, human judgment remains essential to ensure ethical sensitivity and inclusivity. This hybrid model suggests that competency-based approaches should be supported by digital innovation, while ethical oversight should ensure sustainability.

Conceptually, the framework advances three key propositions. First, recruitment strategies that combine competency-based planning with digital platforms improve efficiency and candidate job alignment. Second, selection techniques that integrate psychometric tools, structured interviews, and AI-supported assessments enhance objectivity but must be complemented by human judgment to maintain equity. Third, the overall quality of human resources is strengthened when recruitment and selection systems are both technologically adaptive and ethically grounded, enabling organizations to thrive in volatile environments.

This integrative framework contributes to HRM scholarship by bridging traditional theories of person–job fit with contemporary insights from digital HR transformation. It also provides a practical lens for organizations to design recruitment and selection systems that are responsive to VUCA conditions while safeguarding inclusivity and ethical principles.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with a descriptive–analytical orientation designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of recruitment and selection strategies in the VUCA era. To ensure transparency and replicability, the review process followed the general principles of the PRISMA framework, which guided the identification, screening, and inclusion of the relevant studies.

The search was conducted across three major databases—Google Scholar, DOAJ, and Sinta—chosen for their broad coverage of both international and national publications. These platforms were considered suitable because they provide access to peer-reviewed articles, open-access journals, and accredited national publications, thereby ensuring a diversity of perspectives. The search strategy employed a combination of keywords such as “recruitment,” “selection,” “VUCA,” “digital HR,” “competency-based,” and “employee performance,” using Boolean operators to refine the results and capture studies that explicitly addressed recruitment and selection practices in volatile and uncertain environments.

From the initial search, 312 articles were identified for review. After removing duplicates, 278 records remained for further analysis. Titles and abstracts were then screened against the following inclusion criteria: (1) published between 2021 and 2025, (2) focused on recruitment and selection strategies in the industrial or service sectors, (3) linked recruitment/selection to organizational performance or HR quality, and (4) addressed challenges of VUCA or digital transformation in HRM. Opinion-based studies, those lacking empirical grounding, and those unavailable in full-text were

excluded. Following this process, 57 articles were retained for full-text review, and 32 articles met the eligibility requirements and were included in the synthesis.

The analytical process followed the model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion-drawing. Each article was carefully examined to extract its research focus, methodology, key findings and practical implications. These findings were organized into thematic categories, including recruitment strategies and processes, selection objectivity and effectiveness, the relationship between recruitment-selection and employee performance, and the role of technology and its implementation challenges. Through this thematic synthesis, recurring patterns, contradictions, and gaps were identified, allowing for more critical engagement with the literature.

To strengthen validity and reliability, source triangulation was applied by comparing the findings across journals of different indexing levels and geographical contexts. Direct quotations from the reviewed articles were selectively included to preserve interpretive accuracy. This methodological rigor ensures that the review not only consolidates existing knowledge but also highlights the theoretical gaps and practical challenges that organizations face when designing recruitment and selection systems in the VUCA era.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Recruitment strategies are one of the most important elements of the broader human resource management function. In practice, recruitment is not just an administrative step for filling vacancies; it shapes the kind of people who eventually enter the organization and influences how well the organization can achieve its goals. This is even more visible in workplaces affected by VUCA, where volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity require organizations to design recruitment processes that are more adaptive, structured, and rooted in job-related competencies.

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Recruitment Strategies and Processes

Recruitment strategies are one of the most critical elements of human resource management, as they determine not only who enters the organization but also how effectively the workforce can respond to strategic challenges. In the VUCA era—characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity—recruitment must move beyond administrative routines and evolve into a competency-based, adaptive, and strategically aligned process.

The reviewed literature indicates that effective recruitment begins with a clear understanding of workforce requirements, systematic job analysis, and careful planning of recruitment sources (Purwanggono, 2023). Structured approaches of this kind reduce mismatches, shorten hiring cycles, and improve efficiency (Washillah et al., 2024). Competency-based recruitment has become increasingly relevant because it ensures closer alignment between candidates' technical skills, personal values, and organizational culture.

Digital technologies have transformed recruitment practices. Social media, job portals, and e-recruitment platforms enable organizations to reach a wider applicant pool and automate early screening. Zulkarnaen and Wendra (2022) show that automated filtering saves time and costs, while the Society for Human Resource Management (2024) highlights the potential of predictive analytics and AI-supported systems to improve candidate-job matching and reduce bias. However, these advantages are not without their limitations. Overreliance on digital tools risks oversimplifying complex human attributes, and algorithmic systems may reproduce bias if the training data are not representative. Moreover, while large firms often benefit from advanced HR technologies, SMEs face challenges in adopting such systems because of limited resources and digital literacy.

This tension between efficiency and fairness underscores the need for recruitment strategies that combine technological innovation, human judgment, and ethical safeguards. Digital platforms can

accelerate processes; however, they must be complemented by inclusive practices that account for diverse candidate backgrounds and varying levels of digital access. Without such a balance, recruitment risks becoming efficient but exclusionary.

Overall, recruitment in the VUCA era requires a blend of competency-based approaches, digital innovation and inclusivity. Current studies emphasize efficiency and accuracy; however, gaps remain in understanding how different organizational contexts—particularly SMEs—can adapt recruitment strategies sustainably. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts and cross-sector comparisons to provide more comprehensive insights into recruitment practices under volatile conditions.

4.1.2. Selection Effectiveness and Objectivity

Selection is a decisive phase in human resource management because it determines not only who joins the organization but also how well employees perform and remain committed to the organization over time. In the VUCA era, where uncertainty and complexity are pervasive, the effectiveness of selection processes is crucial. Organizations must ensure that hiring decisions are grounded in fairness, accuracy, and adaptability to rapidly changing job requirements of the workplace.

The reviewed literature suggests that selection is more effective when organizations rely on standardized and competency-based methods of selection. Structured interviews and psychological testing provide a consistent framework for evaluating candidates, thereby reducing the influence of personal biases. Psychometric tools and data-driven systems strengthen decision-making validity and help organizations achieve reliable outcomes. These findings highlight the importance of objectivity in ensuring a good match between candidates and job roles in the recruitment process.

However, challenges remain, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Subjective considerations, such as personal closeness or informal impressions, often influence hiring outcomes in smaller organizations. This reliance on subjective judgment undermines transparency and can lead to mismatches that affect the long-term performance. Moreover, [Society for Human Resource Management \(2024\)](#) promises greater efficiency and objectivity; however, empirical evidence on their fairness and inclusivity remains limited, especially in developing economies where digital literacy and access to technology vary widely.

Digital tools must be complemented by human judgment to preserve ethical sensitivity and inclusivity. Algorithmic systems may inadvertently reproduce bias if the training data are not representative, and candidates with lower digital literacy may be disadvantaged. This tension between efficiency and fairness underscores the need for hybrid selection models that integrate technological innovation and humanistic values.

Overall, the effectiveness of selection depends on how well organizations combine reliable tools, fair procedures, and commitment to meritocracy. In VUCA contexts, adaptive and data-supported selection practices must uphold ethical principles to remain balanced and sustainable. Future research should explore the longitudinal impacts of digital selection systems and conduct comparative studies across SMEs and large firms to provide deeper insights into how objectivity and fairness can be maintained in diverse organizational settings.

4.1.3. The Relationship Between Recruitment–Selection Strategies and Employee Performance

The quality of recruitment and selection processes influences not only who enters the organization but also how employees perform and remain committed to the organization over time. Across the reviewed studies, there is strong agreement that well-designed hiring systems are closely tied to productivity, loyalty, and stability of the workforce. Recruitment and selection systems that emphasize fairness, transparency, and competency alignment can improve job satisfaction and loyalty. When individuals perceive that they were chosen based on objective criteria, they tend to develop a deeper sense of belonging and commitment to the organization. This emotional connection strengthens motivation and supports healthier workplace relationships.

Successful recruitment and selection directly influence productivity and operational efficiencies. The principle of placing “the right person in the right place” becomes central here, as accurate

placement allows employees to work more effectively in roles that match their skills and interests. Conversely, mismatches can lead to lower performance, role conflict, and even work-related stress. Competency-based selection processes reduce turnover, thereby stabilizing workforce composition and lowering the financial and operational costs associated with high attrition rates.

Beyond technical performance, the fairness of recruitment and selection can shape employees' psychological well-being. Handayani (2023) demonstrated that transparent and professional processes foster positive behaviors such as initiative-taking, collaboration, and adherence to organizational values. These findings suggest that recruitment and selection are not merely administrative procedures but mechanisms that influence individual and collective performance outcomes.

However, several limitations of the existing literature must be acknowledged. Many studies rely on cross-sectional designs, which capture short-term effects but fail to explain the sustained impact of recruitment and selection strategies on the long-term employee performance and retention. Moreover, most research focuses on large organizations, leaving SMEs underexplored despite their significant role in generating employment. The unique challenges faced by SMEs—such as limited resources, informal HR practices, and reliance on subjective judgments—remain insufficiently addressed in the current scholarship.

Taken together, the evidence indicates that recruitment and selection quality are key predictors of both individual and organizational performance. However, future research should adopt longitudinal and comparative approaches to better understand how fairness, transparency, and competency alignment influence performance in different organizational contexts. Such studies would provide more robust insights into how recruitment and selection strategies can be optimized to support sustainable workforce development in the VUCA era.

4.1.4. The Role of Technology and Implementation Challenges

Technology has become a transformative force in recruitment and selection, reshaping how organizations identify, evaluate, and appoint candidates for jobs. Digital platforms, automated screening systems, and AI-supported tools allow HR managers to process large applicant pools more efficiently, reduce administrative burdens, and improve the accuracy of candidate-job matching. Studies such as Zulkarnaen and Wendra (2022) demonstrate that automated filtering can save significant time and costs, while the Society for Human Resource Management (2024) highlights the potential of predictive analytics to enhance decision-making and reduce bias. These innovations illustrate how digital HR systems can strengthen organizational agility in the VUCA era.

However, the implementation of technology in recruitment and selection is not without its challenges. One major concern is the digital divide: not all organizations, particularly SMEs, have equal access to advanced HR technology. Limited financial resources and low digital literacy often hinder smaller firms from adopting sophisticated systems, creating disparities in recruitment effectiveness. This divide risks widening the gap between large corporations that benefit from advanced tools and smaller organizations that remain reliant on traditional and often subjective methods.

Another challenge is the ethical implications of algorithmic decision-making. While AI-based systems promise objectivity, they may inadvertently reproduce bias if the training data are not representative of diverse candidate populations. Algorithmic tools must be complemented by human judgment to preserve fairness and inclusivity in the workplace. Without careful oversight, digital recruitment systems risk excluding candidates with lower digital literacy or those from underrepresented backgrounds, undermining the principle of equal opportunity in the recruitment process.

Furthermore, the oversimplification of human attributes remains a recurring issue. Automated systems tend to prioritize measurable competencies, such as technical skills, while overlooking softer qualities, such as adaptability, creativity, and cultural fit. This reductionist approach may lead to mismatches in dynamic environments in which holistic attributes are crucial for long-term success. Therefore, organizations must balance technological efficiency with nuanced human evaluation to ensure sustainable workforce development.

In summary, technology offers significant opportunities to enhance recruitment and selection; however, its implementation requires careful consideration of inclusivity, fairness, and ethical governance. Future research should explore how organizations can design hybrid models that integrate digital innovation with humanistic values to ensure that recruitment systems remain both efficient and equitable. Comparative studies across SMEs and large firms, as well as longitudinal analyses of digital recruitment outcomes, would provide deeper insights into how technology can be harnessed responsibly in diverse organizational contexts.

4.1.5. Thematic Synthesis and Conceptual Implications

The thematic synthesis of the reviewed literature shows that recruitment and selection strategies hold a central position in shaping human resource quality and overall organizational performance, especially when organizations must navigate the uncertainty and complexity of the VUCA era. Four main conceptual points can be drawn from the collected studies.

First, recruitment and selection operate as interconnected systems within the human resource management. Transparent recruitment, aligned with organizational needs and designed to attract relevant candidates, lays the groundwork for a more objective selection process. When both processes are well integrated, organizations are better positioned to build sustainable human capital that is capable of high performance.

Second, competency-based recruitment and selection supported by digital technologies contribute to faster processes and more accurate decision-making. Tools such as e-recruitment platforms, predictive analytics, and psychometric assessments allow organizations to identify candidates more objectively. However, these advancements require strong ethical safeguards. Without proper oversight, risks such as algorithmic bias, data privacy concerns, and neglect of fairness and inclusivity can undermine the benefits of digitalization.

Third, employee performance is shaped not only by competency alignment but also by employees' perceptions of fairness throughout the recruitment and selection process. When individuals feel respected and treated objectively from the beginning, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging and intrinsic motivation. These positive perceptions strengthen commitment, improve productivity, and support the long-term retention of nurses.

Fourth, although technology has brought convenience and efficiency, recruitment and selection must remain rooted in human values. Qualities such as empathy, intuition, and the ability to understand personal values are not easily replicated by automated systems. Therefore, combining technological tools with human judgment is essential for creating selection processes that are both effective and ethically grounded. From these four conclusions, two key conceptual implications can be drawn.

4.1.5.1. Theoretical Implications

This review highlights the need to integrate classical theories in human resource management, such as person–job fit, meritocracy, and the development of individual potential, with contemporary digital paradigms that require faster, more efficient, and technologically adaptive systems. Combining these perspectives encourages the development of a more holistic conceptual model that blends data-driven decision-making with humanistic values such as fairness, employee experience, and organizational justice.

4.1.5.2. Practical Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for both large organizations and SMEs. For large firms, the integration of digital HR systems, such as predictive analytics and AI-supported assessments, can enhance the efficiency and accuracy of recruitment and selection. However, these tools must be implemented with ethical safeguards to prevent algorithmic bias and ensure inclusivity in the workplace. Therefore, establishing governance frameworks and continuously monitoring digital systems is essential.

For SMEs, the challenge lies in balancing limited resources with the need for a fair and transparent recruitment process. Low-cost digital platforms, competency-based interviews, and structured psychometric tools can provide practical solutions without requiring significant investment. SMEs should prioritize HR literacy and training to reduce reliance on subjective judgments and informal practices. By adopting scalable and affordable recruitment strategies, SMEs can strengthen their workforce quality while maintaining fairness.

Across both contexts, organizations must recognize that recruitment and selection are not merely administrative tasks but also strategic levers for long-term performance. Balancing technological efficiency and humanistic values is crucial to ensuring that recruitment systems remain effective and ethical in the VUCA era.

4.2. Critical Discussion

Although the thematic synthesis shows a strong and consistent emphasis on adaptive, competency-based, and technology-supported recruitment and selection strategies, several conceptual and contextual issues require deeper critical attention. First, although many studies agree that recruitment and selection are interdependent, many organizations still treat them as two unrelated administrative stages. This separation often results in a mismatch between the types of candidates recruited and the criteria used during selection. Such misalignment can weaken selection accuracy and increase the risk of hiring individuals who do not fully fit the role of the position. Therefore, organizations need a more integrated perspective—one in which recruitment planning and selection design operate under a single strategic framework rather than as isolated procedures.

Second, although digital technologies have been shown to boost efficiency and accuracy, not all organizations are equally prepared to adopt them. Much of the existing research focuses on large companies or formal sectors with a solid digital infrastructure. These findings may not represent the realities faced by SMEs, informal sectors, or public institutions that still struggle with limited Internet access or inadequate HR capacity. This suggests that technology adoption should be implemented gradually, accompanied by context-sensitive strategies such as HR training and capability enhancement.

Third, although many studies confirm the link between fairness in selection and employee performance, the notion of fairness itself is complex. Perceptions of fairness are shaped not only by formal procedures but also by cultural norms, interpersonal treatment, and a wider social context. In Indonesia, where collectivist values and hierarchical relationships are common, procedural fairness alone may not be sufficient. Interactional fairness (how candidates are treated) and distributive fairness (how outcomes are allocated) also play significant roles in this process. This implies that designing fair selection systems requires sensitivity to cultural and contextual expectations rather than relying solely on standardized criteria.

Fourth, discussions on technology-driven selection sometimes overlook the importance of humanistic elements. Aspects such as empathy, intuition, and understanding of candidates' long-term potential cannot be fully captured by automated systems. The limited literature addressing how technology can be harmonized with human values exposes a clear research gap. Hybrid approaches, where digital tools support but do not replace human judgment, may provide a more balanced pathway that safeguards both efficiency and ethical considerations.

In essence, this critical discussion highlights that the success of recruitment and selection strategies is not determined solely by the tools or methods used. Organizational context, resource readiness, and ethical commitment play equally important roles. Technocratic approaches that ignore cultural and social dimensions risk producing systems that are exclusive, insensitive, and ultimately unsustainable.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings from the thematic synthesis and critical discussion show that strong recruitment and selection strategies are essential for developing high-quality and adaptable human resources. Open recruitment and objective selection help organizations place people more accurately in the roles they are best suited for while nurturing motivation, loyalty, and long-term performance.

Digital technology has significantly improved recruitment and selection, especially in terms of speed and efficiency. However, the effectiveness of these tools still depends on an organization's readiness, including its technological infrastructure, digital literacy, and the presence of clear ethical guidelines. Therefore, technological tools should always be paired with human judgment so that the human values behind selection decisions are not lost.

Theoretically, these findings point to the need for a more integrated conceptual model—one that combines classical HRM principles, such as person–job fit and meritocracy, with modern digital approaches that emphasize speed, efficiency, and adaptability. Such a model is more suitable for navigating VUCA challenges while upholding fairness, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability.

Organizations are encouraged to adopt a holistic and strategic perspective in managing recruitment and selection. This starts with formulating policies that are both competency-based and data-driven so that evaluations reflect not only organizational needs but also performance expectations. The adoption of digital systems should be gradual and adapted to the organization's technological capacity and HR competencies.

Continuous training of HR teams is essential to support this transition. They require the skills to operate digital tools effectively and ethically. Simultaneously, organizations must avoid relying entirely on technology. A balanced approach, where technological efficiency is complemented by human insight, will help maintain fairness and nuance in candidate evaluation. Regular monitoring and evaluation of recruitment and selection systems are necessary to ensure that they remain aligned with labor market changes and organizational values.

By developing adaptive, ethical, and technology-supported recruitment and selection strategies, organizations will be better equipped to navigate VUCA conditions and strengthen their competitive advantage through resilient, high-performing human capital.

Ethical Approval

This study did not involve human participants, primary data collection, or sensitive organizational information. Therefore, ethical approval was not required for this study. This research adhered to academic standards for literature-based studies and followed responsible reporting principles.

Informed Consent Statement

As this study relied entirely on secondary data obtained from previously published literature, informed consent was not required. All materials used in this study were publicly accessible and cited in accordance with academic integrity standards.

Authors' Contributions

VPPS contributed to the conceptualization of the study together with AVN. VPPS was responsible for the methodology and resources of the study. AVN contributed to the validation process, while both VPPS and AVN contributed to the formal analysis. VPPS prepared the original draft of the manuscript, and AVN contributed to the review and editing of the manuscript. Both authors contributed meaningfully to the development of this study.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest related to this study.

Data Availability Statement

All data used in this research were sourced from publicly accessible journal articles indexed in Google Scholar, DOAJ, and the Sinta database. A complete list of references is included in the manuscript. Additional information may be provided by the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Notes on Contributors

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Vicky Purwadi Putra Sawaludin is a fifth-semester undergraduate student in the Psychology Program at Institut Agama Islam Pematang. His academic interests center on organizational psychology, human resource management, and behavioral adaptation within VUCA environments. This article represents part of his ongoing development in industrial and organizational psychology, particularly in strengthening analytical and research competencies.

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