

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUPERIOR HIGH-QUALITY HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE ACCOUNTING PROFESSION

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ABSTRACT

Strengthening the accounting profession to support the Golden Indonesia 2045 vision requires improving the quality of human resources to respond to the acceleration of technological transformation, the development of international professional standards, and the increasing demands for ethical accountability. Human capital theory has emphasised that investments in education, experience, and professional development enhance individual and organisational performance, yet the integration of human resource theory into accounting studies that project future competency needs remains limited. Therefore, this conceptual study develops a framework for a model of human resource excellence relevant to the accounting profession. This research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method by analysing relevant scientific literature. The data were analysed using a descriptive qualitative approach through theoretical synthesis and content analysis. This conceptual study place technical accounting competency, digital literacy, and ethical judgement as key domains shaping professionalism in a knowledge-based economy. The framework integrates Werther and Davis's competency theory to explain the interaction between knowledge, skills, and behaviour in producing superior and competitive human resources. A human resource accounting perspective further strengthens this approach by recognising employees as strategic organisational assets that create sustainable value. The synthesis of various theoretical perspectives produces a conceptual model that can serve as a basis for developing accounting education curricula, professional development policies, and an empirical research agenda to strengthen the capacity of Indonesian accountants to face global economic dynamics.

Keywords: Accounting Profession, Competency Development, Conceptual Framework, Human Capital, Human Resource Excellence

1. Introduction

Human capital theory sees education, training and work experience as strategic investments to improve productivity at both the individual and organisational levels (Becker 2009). This entity perspective is in accordance with the competency theory, which states that organisational effectiveness can be determined through individual attributes and personal characteristics expressed through knowledge-based, skills-based, and work-based behaviours and experiences (Werther and Davis (1996). On the other hand, from an empirical perspective, findings suggest that human capital capacity, which can be defined as the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals, is directly linked to organisational performance because, on one hand, human resources represent the main drivers of creating value and innovation within an

organisation (Aman-Ullah *et al.*, 2022). Human capital is a major contributor among the various determinants that ensure that accounting is free from material misstatements, which increases the transparency of an organisation's financial reporting and ultimately improves the management decision-making process. The literature further indicates that in connection with the evolution of digital technology and data analytics, multidimensional competencies, including digital skills, analytics, and a general understanding of business, come to be required of accountants (Muhammad *et al.* 2021; Doktoralina *et al.* 2025).

However, strengthening human resource quality within the framework of national development toward Indonesia's Golden Goals 2045 still faces various structural challenges. Several global indicators show that the Indonesian workforce still needs to fully demonstrate its human capital readiness for knowledge-based and digital economic activities, as well as its readiness to implement the digital transformation of accounting, from an administrative function to a strategic partner in financial data analysis, risk management, and organisational decision-making (Bowo *et al.* 2025). Therefore, the integration of technologies including artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and digital accounting information systems has made it important for the accounting profession to implement more adaptive and technology-based competencies. However, most research still discusses human capital, professional competency, and digital transformation separately, so the conceptual relationship between these three dimensions in the context of the accounting profession has not been systematically explained. This gap indicates a need to develop a conceptual framework that integrates human capital, professional competence, and digital competency to explain the formation of superior human resources in the accounting profession and their contribution to the quality of financial reporting and organisational performance.

2. Literature Review

According to human capital theory, education, training and work experience are investments that increase the skills and productivity of workers (Becker, 2009). The key message for the community is ensuring everyone understands that investing in education and competitiveness matters both for individual pathways and relates to longer-term workplace productivity & performance. Investment in education and training also strengthens the ability of individuals to adapt to changes in technology and the labour force so that organisations can remain competitive in the modern economy. According to Labour economics literature, human capital is a collection of personal traits and skills that lead to greater output at work and increase the performance level of the organisation.

Human capital development is then translated into professional competencies through the competency theory perspective, which explains that organisational effectiveness is influenced by the quality of individual competencies, which encompass knowledge, skills, professional attitudes, and work experience. These competencies in the accounting profession are not limited to technical financial reporting skills; an understanding of accounting standards; professional ethical integrity; or the ability to analyse financial information relevant to supporting strategic organisational decision-making. On the other hand, digital transformation has changed the landscape of accounting practices. When leveraging technologies like artificial intelligence, data analytics, blockchain and digital accounting information systems, financial data processing becomes more efficient and accurate (Abdullah dan Almaqtari 2024). Technological advancements have transformed the purpose of accountants from being an administrative role to one that is more strategic, i.e. data analysis and organisational decision-

making. Therefore, recent literature underscores the importance of digital competency as part of human capital development in the modern accounting profession, as digitisation requires accounting professionals to possess analytical skills, technological literacy, and the ability to interpret more complex financial data (Januszewski *et al.* 2024).

The human resource accounting approach reinforces this perspective by viewing human resources as an organisational asset that has economic value and contributes to the creation of corporate value. These investments lead to improved organisational performance while constituting an assertion of the organisation's competence before stakeholders and strengthening its legitimacy. In the accounting profession, the quality of human capital determines the credibility of financial reporting and organisational transparency, as highly competent accountants can produce more accurate and reliable financial information (Mareta *et al.* 2025). However, most research still discusses human capital, professional competency, and digital transformation separately; thus, the conceptual relationship between these three dimensions in the context of the accounting profession has not been systematically explained (Bowo *et al.* 2025). Therefore, this paper attempts to develop a conceptual framework that integrates human capital, professional competence, and digital competence to explain the formation of superior human resources in the accounting profession and its contribution to the quality of financial reporting and organisational performance as shown in Fig. 1

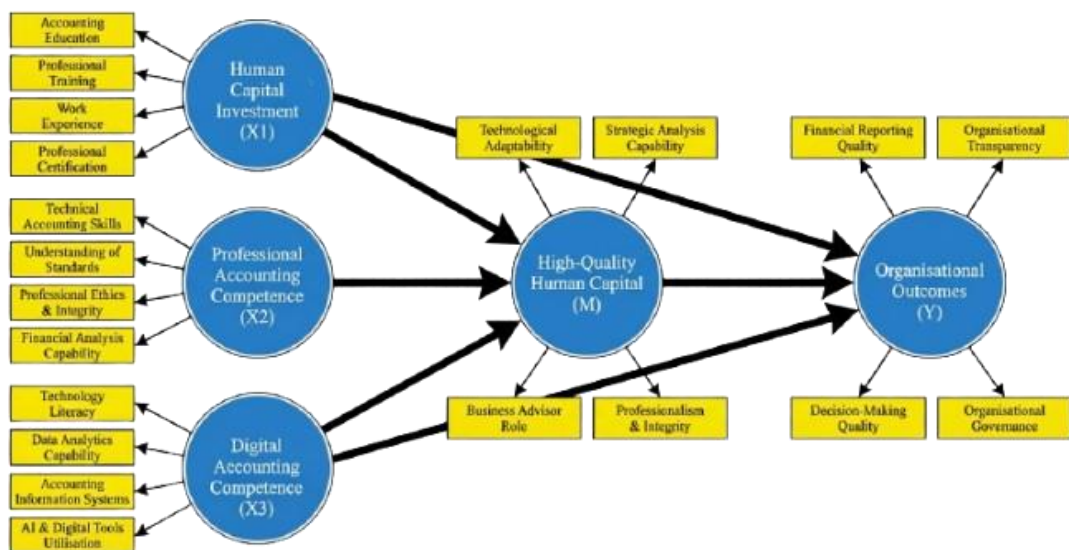


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of High-Quality Human Capital in the Accounting Profession

3. Research Method

This research is conceptual in nature and is structured in stages through a synthesis of relevant literature. A literature review of human capital (Becker 1994), competency theory in human resource management, and digital competency in the accounting profession is used to identify the main research variables. Additionally, the relationships between these variables are developed based on the resource-based view of competition and dynamic capability theory, which highlight that internal resources form the basis of competitive advantage (Barney 1991;

Barney and Clark 2007), and reflect an organisation's ability to combine and transform resources in response to changing business environments. The latter stands out from the other terms, where human capital investment and professional competency are internal forces shaping the quality of human resources, whereas digital competency is a reinforcing factor stimulating the capacity of the profession to evolve as technology transforms accounting. Based on this literature integration, this study develops a conceptual framework that explains how the development of human capital, professional competence, and digital competency can shape superior human resources in the accounting profession and strengthen the role of accountants in financial information analysis and strategic organisational decision-making.

4. Results and Discussion

The conceptual model of this research indicates that the quality of human resources in the accounting profession is created through integration between investments in human capital (HC), professional competencies and digital competencies. Investment in education, training, and work experience gives an individual more knowledge and skills and strengthens accounting professionals' competence. The HC theory explains that education and training are investments that improve workforce productivity and long-term organisational performance.... Therefore, in line with the accounting profession, investment in strengthening these skills can improve technical financial reporting skills, gain an understanding of regulations, maintain integrity and ethics, and master technology to produce accurate and reliable financial information (Januszewski *et al.* 2024).

Digital transformation subsequently enhances the professional competencies by employing technologies, including artificial intelligence, data analytics, and modern accounting information systems, that streamline accounting tasks and facilitate the financial data analysis process. These technological developments are driving a shift in the role of accountants from an administrative function to a strategic one in business information analysis and organisational decision-making. The integration of professional and digital competencies creates a multidimensional capacity that enables accountants to interpret financial data, identify organisational risks, and provide strategic recommendations to management. Therefore, the research conceptual model places human capital as the foundation for the formation of professional competence, while digital competence plays a role as a reinforcing factor that enables the accounting profession to adapt to technological changes and the dynamics of the knowledge-based economy. Based on the synthesis of human capital theory, competence theory, and the development of literature on digital transformation in the accounting profession, this study proposes a conceptual framework that explains the formation of superior human resources in the accounting profession. The conceptual framework in this paper positions human capital investment as the foundation for developing professional accounting competencies. Then, reinforcement transforms into digital technologies in areas including creating higher-quality human resources with goodwill for the market users: the ability to understand quality financial reporting, views on organisation and strategic organisational decision-making.

5. Conclusion

This conceptual study confirms that the integration of digital transformation, HCI, professional competencies, and digital competencies plays a strategic role in creating superior human resources. Human capital, created through educational qualifications, training, and

work experience, enhances the competency of accounting professionals, enabling them to secure the technical expertise needed to produce high-quality, credible, ethical, and analytical information for the organisation. Meanwhile, digital transformation through technologies, i.e., artificial intelligence, data analytics, and accounting information systems, expands the role of accountants from an administrative function to a strategic one in financial information analysis and organisational decision-making, requiring the accounting profession to master technological literacy and advanced analytical skills. Three-dimensional integration provides a theoretical lens through which the relationship between quality human capital and high-quality financial reporting will strengthen organisational governance and ultimately enhance the competitiveness of the accounting profession in the digital economy.

This results in developing a novel conceptual framework that combines human capital theory, the competency model, and data from digital transformation literature into one conceptual framework that explains how superior human resources are formed within the accounting profession, thereby contributing theoretically. In practice, the framework can be used as a foundation for graduate curriculum development in accounting education, improving professional training programmes and developing human resources development policies in accounting. Future research should empirically test this conceptual foundation through a quantitative approach to determine the significance of human capital investment, including professional competence, as well as digital competency, in improving financial reporting quality and organisation.

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