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HRIS and Competency Governance: Evidence from an Algerian Industrial Subsidiary

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Abstract:
This study examines the role of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in supporting strategic competency management within an industrial organisation. It explores how HRIS transforms human resource data into organisational knowledge that enhances performance and strengthens sustainable competitive advantage. The study addresses the following research question: How does HRIS support strategic competency management within an organisation?
A qualitative descriptive case study was conducted at the SAMHA subsidiary of the Cevital Group. Data were collected through internal company documents and semi-structured interviews with managers from the Human Resources and Information Systems departments during a two-week field study.
The findings indicate that the SAMHA subsidiary relies on an integrated HRIS environment that supports key human resource functions, including recruitment, performance evaluation, training, and strategic analysis. The analysis further shows that the combined use of these systems supports the four dimensions of the KSAOs framework—knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics. More importantly, the integration of these systems enables the organisation to convert HR data into actionable organisational knowledge, reinforcing the strategic role of HRIS in competency governance and its alignment with organisational objectives.
Keywords: Human Resource Information System (HRIS); Talent Management; Competitive Advantage; Digital Transformation; KSAO's
Jel Classification Codes: M15; M12; L21; O33 ; J24

الملخص:
تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف دور نظام معلومات الموارد البشرية (HRIS) في دعم الإدارة الاستراتيجية للكفاءات داخل المؤسسة الصناعية، من خلال تحليل قدرته على تحويل بيانات الموارد البشرية إلى معرفة تنظيمية تُعزز الأداء وتُرسّخ الميزة التنافسية المستدامة. وتنطلق الدراسة من التساؤل البحثي الآتي: كيف يُسهم نظام معلومات الموارد البشرية في دعم الإدارة الاستراتيجية للكفاءات داخل المؤسسة؟
اعتمدت الدراسة على منهج دراسة الحالة الوصفي النوعي، إذ أُجريت الدراسة الميدانية على مستوى فرع SAMHA التابع لمجمع سيفيتال. وجُمعت البيانات من خلال الوثائق الداخلية للمؤسسة ومقابلات شبه منظمة أُجريت مع مسيرين من مديريتي الموارد البشرية ونظم المعلومات خلال دراسة ميدانية امتدت أسبوعين.
أظهرت النتائج أن فرع SAMHA يعتمد على بيئة متكاملة لنظام معلومات الموارد البشرية تدعم الوظائف الأساسية لإدارة الموارد البشرية، بما في ذلك التوظيف، وتقييم الأداء، والتكوين، والتحليل الاستراتيجي. كما أظهر التحليل أن الاستخدام المتكامل لهذه الأنظمة يدعم الأبعاد الأربعة لإطار KSAOs ، وهي: المعارف، والمهارات، والقدرات، والخصائص الأخرى. والأهم من ذلك، أن تكامل هذه الأنظمة يُمكّن المؤسسة من تحويل بيانات الموارد البشرية إلى معرفة تنظيمية قابلة للتوظيف، مما يُعزز الدور الاستراتيجي لنظام معلومات الموارد البشرية في حوكمة الكفاءات ومواءمتها مع الأهداف التنظيمية للمؤسسة.
الكلمات المفتاحية: نظام معلومات الموارد البشرية(HRIS) ؛ إدارة المواهب؛ الميزة التنافسية؛ التحول الرقمي؛ نموذج KSAOs.
تصنيف جال: M15 ؛ M12؛ L21؛ O33؛ J24.

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I- Introduction :

The field of Human Resource Management (HRM) has been significantly reshaped by the rapid advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT), prompting organisations to adopt increasingly data-driven, adaptive, and forward-looking approaches to enhance organisational performance and sustain competitive advantage. Within this evolving landscape, competency management has emerged as a strategic HRM approach focused on identifying, developing, and optimising human capital as a key driver of value creation and organisational excellence.

As organisations continue their digital transformation, Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) have evolved beyond their traditional administrative role to become strategic platforms that support managerial decision-making, improve information flow, and strengthen the alignment between human resource practices and organisational objectives. By integrating and analysing workforce data, HRIS enables organisations to adopt a more structured and evidence-based approach to competency development and workforce planning.

Scholarly interest in the relationship between HRIS and competency management has grown considerably, reflecting the increasing recognition of their strategic interdependence. Kavanagh et al. (2025) emphasise the strategic contribution of HRIS to managerial decision-making, arguing that these systems transform raw HR data into actionable insights that improve organisational effectiveness and efficiency. Similarly, Bohlouli (2017) examines the integration of competency models into intelligent HR systems and demonstrates that HRIS can serve as predictive tools capable of anticipating future skill requirements and
supporting proactive competency development strategies.

Although these studies highlight the strategic importance of HRIS in competency management, they differ in their methodological approaches and analytical perspectives. Furthermore, most existing research has focused on developed or digitally mature contexts, with limited attention given to emerging economies, particularly the Algerian industrial sector. This represents an important research gap, especially in light of the growing technological pressures and competitive challenges faced by large manufacturing organisations in Algeria.

To address this gap, the present study examines the role of HRIS in supporting strategic competency management within an Algerian industrial context. Specifically, it focuses on the SAMHA subsidiary of the Cevital Group as a case study, providing empirical insights into the practical application of HRIS in a real organisational setting.

The study is guided by the following research question:

To what extent does the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) contribute to enhancing strategic competency management within the organisation?

Based on this research question, the study proposes the hypothesis that the five information systems deployed within the SAMHA subsidiary—SAGE RH, ZKTeco, SAP SuccessFactors, Zoho People, and Microsoft Power BI—collectively constitute a functionally integrated HRIS ecosystem capable of supporting the four dimensions of the KSAOs model and enabling strategic competency management, although their cross-system integration remains under continuous development.

II. Competency Management in the Context of Digital Transformation: Towards the Adoption of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) as a Strategic Mechanism

II -1 Conceptual Foundations of Competency Management: From Competence to Competency Management

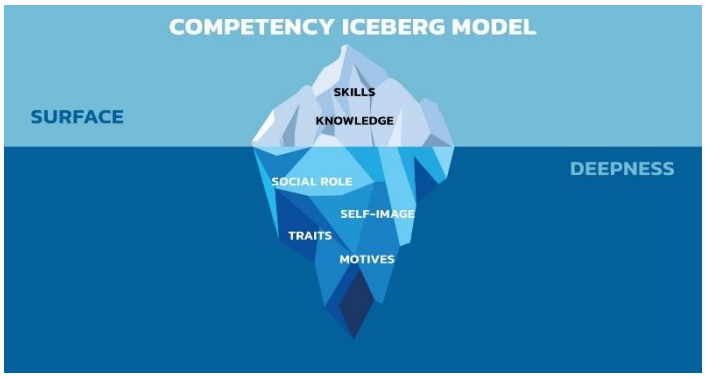
Competence is a multidimensional concept that has been examined across various fields, including psychology, education, and strategic management, resulting in a wide range of perspectives on the subject. The present study focuses on the concept of competence within the context of strategic management, particularly in the field of human resource management.

In this context, the conceptualisation of competence has evolved beyond mere skill or knowledge possession to encompass an individual's ability to successfully and effectively mobilise an integrated set of resources (knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal traits) to address complex and non-routine work situations.

Parmentier (2008) argues that competence is not merely the knowledge possessed by individuals within an organisation, but is embodied in their ability to apply that knowledge within a specific professional context, leading to tangible results that contribute to improving the organisation's overall performance. Knowledge alone remains of limited value unless it is translated into professional practice capable of generating added value, which is what makes competence a strategic resource that enhances the organisation's ability to adapt and survive. Jarnias (2003) adds that the focus on competencies is not limited to identifying or measuring them, but extends to creating a working environment that provides individuals with genuine opportunities to develop and expand them on an ongoing basis. According to the author, the organisation is required to provide the organisational climate and incentives that enable employees' capabilities to be activated and directed towards achieving strategic objectives.

The Iceberg model captures this depth by distinguishing between surface-level competencies — such as skills and knowledge — which are observable and measurable, and deeper elements — such as traits, motivations, and values — which are harder to measure but have the greatest impact on long-term performance.

Figure 1: Competency iceberg Model



Source: Avakian,L. (2000), Competencies in Human Resource Practices (Comp Quick), MIT Human Resources, p. 19 Available at : https://web.mit.edu/personnel/irt/compquick/pdf/cqguide.pdf (accessed 20/10/2025 14:19)

Competencies constitute a core concept in the field of Human Resource Management, as they represent an integrated set of knowledge, skills, and behaviours that individuals mobilise in the workplace to achieve effective and high-level performance. These competencies are structured across three interrelated and interacting levels: individual competencies, collective competencies, and organisational competencies. Together, these components form an integrated dynamic system, where no level operates in isolation; rather, each level continuously feeds into and reinforces the others through an ongoing process of interaction and integration.

Individual competencies are reflected in the personal abilities, knowledge, and experience that an individual possesses and expresses through their professional performance. They include scientific knowledge, technical skills, and tacit knowledge, as well as personal values and intrinsic motivations that drive individuals toward creativity and excellence. As illustrated in Figure 1 above, individual competence follows an iceberg logic, where deep elements (motivations, beliefs, values) form the foundation of visible performance. Given the rapid changes in today's business environment, the development of individual competencies is no longer an option but a strategic

necessity for organisations seeking excellence and sustainability, as qualified human capital represents a key determinant of competitiveness and innovation. In summary, individual competencies refer to the set of attributes, knowledge, and skills possessed by employees that are reflected in their professional performance Collective competencies go beyond individual performance and emerge when individuals work in coordination and harmony within teams. Collective competence does not merely represent the sum of individual competencies; rather, it is an emergent outcome generated through teamwork, effective communication, and the sharing of knowledge and experience among members. Organisations that rely on teamwork are able to develop what is known as a collective mind capable of addressing problems and adapting to environmental changes. Collective competence serves as an important coordination mechanism within the organisation, as it contributes to integrating dispersed individual competencies across different departments and organisational units. This makes it a fundamental pillar in building organisational competence at a broader level. Collective competencies are generally classified into two main types: team-specific competencies, which emerge through daily interaction among members of the same team and are characterised by internal cohesion and shared understanding; and general collective competencies, which are developed at the level of larger organisational groups and involve cooperation between different teams to align efforts and orientations. Studies indicate that these competencies are manifested through several key organisational practices, including effective communication, collaborative decision-making, and the development of shared mental models within teams. These competencies emerge through interaction, integration, and smooth coordination among individuals and teams, representing a capability that goes beyond the sum of individual competencies. Therefore, HRIS is required to support these competencies across organisational units through collaboration tools and knowledge management systems.

Organisational competence represents the highest level of competence, as it reflects the organisation's ability to coordinate and mobilise its collective knowledge and expertise in an integrated manner to achieve its strategic objectives. It is not simply the sum of individual and group competencies, but rather the organisation's collective capacity to learn from its experiences and to exploit its knowledge resources in a sustainable way. Organisational competence is considered an indicator of the organisation's maturity in knowledge management, as it is gradually built through the accumulation of experiences, the structuring of collective learning processes, and continuous interaction between individuals and groups. A set of key characteristics defines organisational competence, most notably the principle of specificity, meaning that organisational competence cannot be separated from the organisation's identity, culture, and values; the principle of action, which links competence to actual performance outcomes; the teleological nature, which orients it toward predefined strategic objectives; the interactive and cumulative characteristic, which ensures its continuous development through practice and collective learning; as well as the recognition dimension, which positions organisational competence as part of the organisation's identity and as a source of credibility and trust among stakeholders.

Organisational competence also has an evolutionary nature, as it is continuously renewed over time through the reapplication of knowledge and experience in new situations, thereby enhancing the organisation's ability to adapt and innovate in a complex and changing environment.

Accordingly, competencies should not be viewed as separate categories, but rather as an integrated system whose components interact continuously in a dynamic process of formation and development. Individual competencies feed collective competencies through knowledge and experience sharing, while collective competencies provide the foundation for building organisational competence, which in turn positively influences the development of individuals and groups. Through this interactive relationship, organisations are able to achieve organisational learning and continuous renewal, which are essential conditions for superior performance and survival in a rapidly changing competitive environment. From this perspective, it is no longer

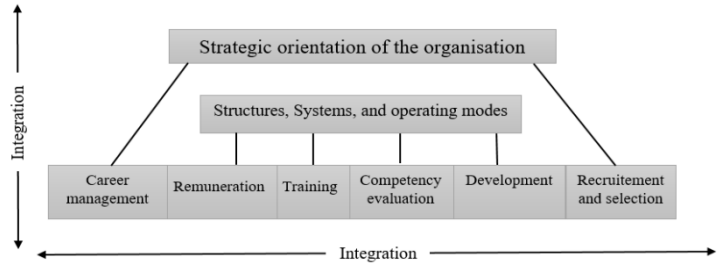
sufficient for organisations to possess individual, collective, and organisational competencies; rather, they must manage them within an integrated strategic vision. Here, competency management provides the conceptual framework that structures this process, with Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) acting as its digital enabler.

II -2 Competency Management as an Evolving Intellectual Current in the Enhancement of Human Resource Management

The conceptual analysis of earlier theorisation reveals that competence is not a predefined or static input, but rather a dynamic system shaped through the interaction of its three levels. However, this interaction does not occur automatically, nor does it generate strategic value without a managerial mechanism capable of monitoring, guiding, and evaluating it. From this perspective, competency management has emerged as a managerial approach that seeks to transform competence from a theoretical concept into an effective organisational practice.

Competency management constitutes a foundational element of modern human resource management, as it is based on engaging individuals in learning processes and knowledge sharing within the organisation. Through this interaction, a new organisational culture is takes root, grounded in continuous learning and self-development, enabling the organisation to maintain a sustainable competitive position. The employee is no longer viewed merely as an executor of assigned tasks, but rather as a partner in value creation and innovation. In the same vein, Defélix & Retour (2007) argue that competency management represents an effective tool for strengthening the links between the different components of the organisation, including human, organisational, and technological resources. It contributes to building communication bridges among individuals and aligning efforts around a shared vision. Through active participation in achieving objectives, competencies are transformed into collective capital that enriches the organisation and enhances its capacity for change and innovation. Competency management goes beyond its procedural dimension to become an integrated system encompassing methods and tools that enable the identification, assessment, and development of existing competencies in accordance with the organisation's future needs. It is not merely an administrative activity, but rather a comprehensive strategy that ensures balance between present and future through proactive anticipation of market requirements and technological developments. Accordingly, competency management aims to achieve strategic alignment between the organisation's objectives and the requirements of individual and collective performance, thereby enabling the development of human capabilities for creativity and initiative, and transforming knowledge into sustainable economic and organisational value. It represents a new management philosophy that redefines the relationship between the organisation and its employees, making competence a central axis of development and excellence in a volatile and rapidly evolving organisational environment. Furthermore, Van Beirendonck Lou (2006) addressed the analysis of both horizontal and vertical integration of competency management. He emphasised the importance of both types of integration as a fundamental condition for the effectiveness of competency management within organisations. In this sense, competency management constitutes a bridge between organisational strategy and human resources within the institution, as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 2: Horizontal and Vertical Integration of Competency Management



Source: Van Beirendonck,L. (2006), All Competent: Competency Management in the Enterprise, De Boeck Publishing, Belgium, p. 33.

This figure illustrates the relationship between the organisation's overall strategy and competency management tools across multiple levels, including recruitment, training, competency assessment, and career management. It emphasises the necessity of integrating both the strategic and operational dimensions of competency management. Furthermore, it describes two essential forms of integration required to transform competency management into a strategic organisational function. Vertical integration refers to the alignment of human competencies with the organisation's vision, mission, and overall strategy, ensuring that the competencies required and developed among individuals are directed toward achieving the organisation's highest strategic objectives. Horizontal integration, on the other hand, refers to the alignment of all human resource activities and functions — such as recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and compensation — around competency models as their central reference point, ensuring that all HR practices are grounded in and consistent with the defined competency frameworks.

II -3 Competency Management Approaches:

The growing interest in competency management has generated a set of diverse approaches that aim to provide methodological tools designed to ensure the effective management of competencies within organisations. In this context, organisations are required to select the most appropriate tool that aligns with their organisational structure, the nature of their activities, as well as their strategic objectives and long-term vision. Five main approaches can be identified that represent the most prominent contemporary trends shaping modern managerial thinking in the field of human resource management.

A- The Cognitive / Constructivist Approach: This approach integrates academic knowledge and practical experience to define competencies, aiming to bridge theory and practice for developing coherent and effective skill sets. The theoretical dimension is based on scientific and organisational frameworks, while the practical dimension relies on field observation and real work situations to ensure adaptability to professional contexts. As highlighted by Held (1995), this approach emphasises the integration of knowledge and practice in competency management. It considers competencies not as simple resource accumulation, but as the ability to synthesise and organise knowledge and skills to solve complex problems. This makes competency dynamic and adaptable to changing situations, which is essential for modern HRIS systems.

B- The Skills-Based Approach: This approach focuses on employees' skills and competencies rather than formal qualifications or traditional job descriptions. Its main objective is to build a flexible and future-oriented workforce capable of adapting to rapidly changing labor market demands. It emphasises the identification of both technical and behavioural skills required for

job performance, using competencies as a key indicator for evaluating individual performance and achievement. This approach is increasingly dominant in modern workplaces characterised by digital transformation and organisational agility. It also provides a strong theoretical foundation for linking competency management with Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), enabling more dynamic tracking, assessment, and development of workforce capabilities.

C- **The Behavioural Approach:** The behavioural approach, developed in the United States in the 1970s within the behaviourist school of thought, defines competencies through observable workplace behaviours. It uses tools such as performance appraisal, assessment centres, and job analysis to evaluate actual behaviour and predict future performance. This approach views behaviour as a direct indicator of competence and has contributed to more objective assessment models in HRM. However, it is criticised for focusing only on observable aspects while neglecting deeper elements such as motivation, values, and cognitive processes. This limitation led to more comprehensive models like KSAOs, which integrate both visible and underlying dimensions of competence.

D- **The KSAOs Approach:** Among the most comprehensive approaches in competency management, the KSAOs model stands as the most widely adopted theoretical framework in Human Resource Management for defining and assessing human competence. It is grounded in four integrated dimensions that encompass both the visible and latent aspects of competence: **Knowledge**, referring to the individual's theoretical and cognitive capital; **Skills**, representing observable and measurable practical abilities; **Abilities**, which reflect the underlying potential that forms the foundation for learning and professional development; and **Other Characteristics**, encompassing the deeper determinants of motivation, values, and attitudes.

What distinguishes this approach from earlier models is its refusal to reduce competence to a single dimension. Instead, it offers a holistic representation of the competent individual, enabling organisations to apply competency frameworks across the full spectrum of HR functions — from recruitment and performance evaluation to career planning and succession management. It should be noted that the KSAOs model is itself a specific operationalisation of the broader **Competency Approach** — the overarching theoretical framework most widely used in HRM to identify, describe, and assess human competence. While the Competency Approach aims to go beyond any single-dimensional focus on knowledge or skill alone, the KSAOs model provides its most structured and operational form, by systematically integrating both the surface-level (visible) and deep-level (latent) dimensions that shape individual performance and potential.

E- **The Process-Based Approach:** The Process-Based Approach defines competence as the organisation's ability to effectively use its human resources in specific work contexts. It focuses on translating competencies into practical, measurable standards linked to organisational structures and job requirements rather than describing them theoretically. It is mainly applied through competency frameworks and job descriptions, which support key HR functions such as recruitment, performance evaluation, and training planning.

Taken together, all five approaches converge on a shared necessity: an informational infrastructure capable of supporting their implementation and ensuring their continuity. No approach — whether cognitive, behavioural, or process-based — can achieve its strategic impact without a system that collects, analyses, and channels relevant data. This is precisely the role that HRIS fulfils within the modern organisation.

II.4. Historical Development and Strategic Role of HRIS in Competency Management

Before examining the strategic role of HRIS in the digital era, it is essential to outline the core process through which competency management operates. This process encompasses four interconnected activities: (1) competency identification, whereby organisations define the knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics required to achieve their strategic objectives; (2) competency assessment, through which current employee competency levels are evaluated and gaps are identified; (3) competency development, translating assessment results into targeted training plans and individualised development programmes; and (4) strategic alignment, ensuring that developed competencies are continuously aligned with the organisation's evolving objectives and competitive requirements. These four activities form a cyclical and integrated process in which HRIS plays a central enabling role at each stage, as elaborated below.

Building on the previous approaches, competencies—at individual, collective, and organisational levels—are now recognised as a core form of intellectual capital within organisations. Consequently, competency management has evolved into a key strategic function. It no longer focuses solely on identifying and assessing competencies, but also on aligning them with organisational objectives, anticipating future needs, and integrating them into strategic decision-making as a source of competitive advantage.

In this context, digital transformation has emerged as a major driver of competency renewal. It has significantly reshaped work environments, tools, communication methods, and decision-making processes. As a result, organisations are required to redefine competencies by incorporating digital skills, fostering organisational agility, and promoting continuous learning to keep pace with rapid change. There is also a strong and complementary relationship between digital transformation and competency management, extending beyond technical aspects to include human and organisational dimensions. The success of digital transformation largely depends on the readiness and adaptability of human competencies. In this regard, Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) plays a pivotal role in providing precise and actionable competency data, thereby enabling continuous planning, monitoring, and development of human capital. Furthermore, digital tools—such as online platforms, interactive applications, and data analytics, including artificial intelligence—facilitate performance evaluation, identify training needs, and support forecasting of future competencies.

Thus, digital competency management has become a critical condition for successful organisational transformation. Despite challenges such as digital skill gaps, resistance to change, and the slow adoption of integrated HR systems, digital transformation offers significant opportunities, including improved productivity, faster decision-making, enhanced transparency, and increased competitiveness at both national and international levels.

It has become essential to develop knowledge management strategies supported by Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) as a fundamental pillar for effective competency management. As a result, digital and knowledge-based competencies are now considered strategic components of human capital and key drivers of organisational excellence.

HRIS is recognised as a core system that organisations rely on to provide accurate and timely information for human resource decision-making. Its adoption has become a defining feature of organisations pursuing a long-term strategic orientation. Its value extends beyond improving operational efficiency to supporting strategic decision-making and enabling proactive and flexible management of human competencies. This, in turn, enhances performance efficiency and optimises the use of human resources in achieving organisational objectives.

However, scholars have differed in defining HRIS due to the rapid evolution of information and communication technologies. Despite this diversity, there is a broad consensus in the literature regarding its fundamental nature and function. HRIS can be defined as an integrated system of databases, software, and technological and human components designed to collect, process, store, and retrieve human resource data in order to support decision-making, improve performance efficiency, and ensure the optimal utilisation of human capital in achieving strategic goals.

The use of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in organisations is not recent, but rather the result of a long historical evolution that began with the emergence of mainframe computers in the 1960s and 1970s. Initially, HRIS functioned as a limited administrative tool within traditional personnel management, where competencies were managed in a fragmented and disconnected manner, without integration into a coherent strategic vision. Performance appraisal was retrospective, focusing on past results, while training was reactive, aimed at addressing immediate skill gaps. The primary objective at that stage was operational efficiency. Over time, HRIS has evolved into a strategic driver widely used in Strategic Competency Management. This shift reflects a transition toward a proactive approach, ensuring that both current and future competencies are aligned with organisational strategy and contribute to sustaining competitive advantage. In this perspective, competencies are no longer viewed as a cost, but as a strategic asset. Furthermore, achieving strategic alignment has become essential. This involves vertical integration, ensuring consistency between the organisation's competency model and its overall strategy, as well as horizontal integration across all HR practices—such as recruitment, training, and compensation—based on a competency-driven approach.

To understand the current strategic role of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in competency management, it is essential to consider their evolutionary trajectory. This role did not emerge instantaneously but developed progressively through four major stages, reflecting the transformation of HR functions within organisations. In the first stage, HRIS was limited to administrative automation, focusing on processing basic employee data and routine operations **with the aim of improving** operational efficiency. The second stage marked a shift toward functional HR management, where the system expanded to support recruitment, workforce planning, and employee benefits, thereby enhancing operational effectiveness. In the third stage, HRIS acquired a strategic dimension, evolving into a Human Capital and Talent Management system. At this level, it enabled alignment between HR practices and organisational strategy through the integration of performance appraisal, succession planning, and e-learning systems. The fourth stage represents the most advanced phase, characterised by cloud-based systems and predictive analytics. HRIS has become a key tool for data-driven decision-making, improving the digital employee experience, and strengthening competitive advantage through intelligent and flexible competency management. These advancements—particularly the adoption of cloud technologies and predictive analytics—have reinforced strategic competency management as a comprehensive process aimed at identifying, evaluating, developing, and integrating competencies into core organisational decision-making. HRIS is no longer limited to supporting administrative functions; it has become a central tool for ensuring the alignment of human resource management efforts with organisational strategic objectives. This is achieved by providing accurate and reliable data, and by integrating key HR practices—such as recruitment, performance evaluation, and employee development—with competency frameworks and career pathways. Through this integration, HRIS enables organisations to manage competencies in a coherent and strategic manner, ensuring that human capital effectively contributes to long-term organisational performance and competitive advantage. Within this framework, the competency management cycle highlights five interconnected strategic stages in which HRIS plays a central role in ensuring

integration and effectiveness. The cycle begins with competency identification and design, where strategic orientations are translated into functional and core competency models, with HRIS facilitating their standardisation and alignment with career paths and performance indicators.

The second stage involves competency assessment, where HRIS enables precise identification of competency gaps through comprehensive evaluation tools and real-time reporting. This is followed by competency development, where assessment results are linked to learning management systems, allowing the design of individualised learning plans and targeted training programs based on continuous learning. In the fourth stage—competency acquisition and allocation—HRIS supports e-recruitment, succession planning, and the identification of high-potential employees. The cycle culminates in the strategic deployment of competencies, where advanced analytics are used to generate predictive indicators related to talent retention risks and the expected return on competency development. Through this structural and informational integration, competency management enabled by HRIS becomes a dynamic, data-driven system capable of aligning human capabilities with organisational strategic objectives and sustaining competitive advantage. Furthermore, while the theoretical framework establishes HRIS as a fundamental informational backbone for strategic competency management, its true effectiveness can only be validated through practical application. In this regard, the study aims to apply this framework to a real organisational context by analysing the functioning of HRIS within the SAMHA subsidiary of the Cevital Group, as an industrial case that combines production complexity with the imperative of digital transformation in competency management.

III. Empirical Analysis: Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) as a Mechanism for Enhancing Strategic Competency Management — Case Study of the SAMHA Subsidiary of the Cevital Group

The theoretical framework developed in the preceding sections—spanning the conceptualisation of competence and the strategic positioning of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in its management—necessitates empirical examination to assess its manifestation within organisational settings. Accordingly, this chapter operationalises this framework within a specific Algerian industrial context by investigating the functioning of HRIS within the SAMHA subsidiary of the Cevital Group. Particular attention is given to its capacity to transform HR data into actionable organisational knowledge, thereby enhancing competency management and contributing to sustained competitive advantage.

Within the broader trajectory of human resource management digitalisation, the SAMHA subsidiary of the Cevital Group has established itself as a prominent industrial actor in Algeria's electronics and home appliance sector. Founded with the objective of reinforcing national production through technology transfer and the localisation of industrial expertise, the subsidiary has progressively consolidated its market position. This evolution has been driven by the adoption of integrated information systems and advanced technological infrastructures, which have significantly improved managerial efficiency and product quality.

SAMHA operates as a specialised unit in the design, manufacturing, and assembly of electronic and household appliances. It is distinguished by its capacity to effectively integrate human competencies with digital technologies across multiple stages of production and management. The empirical investigation underpinning this study was conducted within the Cevital Group, specifically at the SAMHA subsidiary, with the aim of examining the deployed HRIS, analysing its operational dynamics and evolutionary trajectory, and evaluating its contribution to strategic decision-making processes related to competency management.

III.1. Presentation of the SAMHA Subsidiary

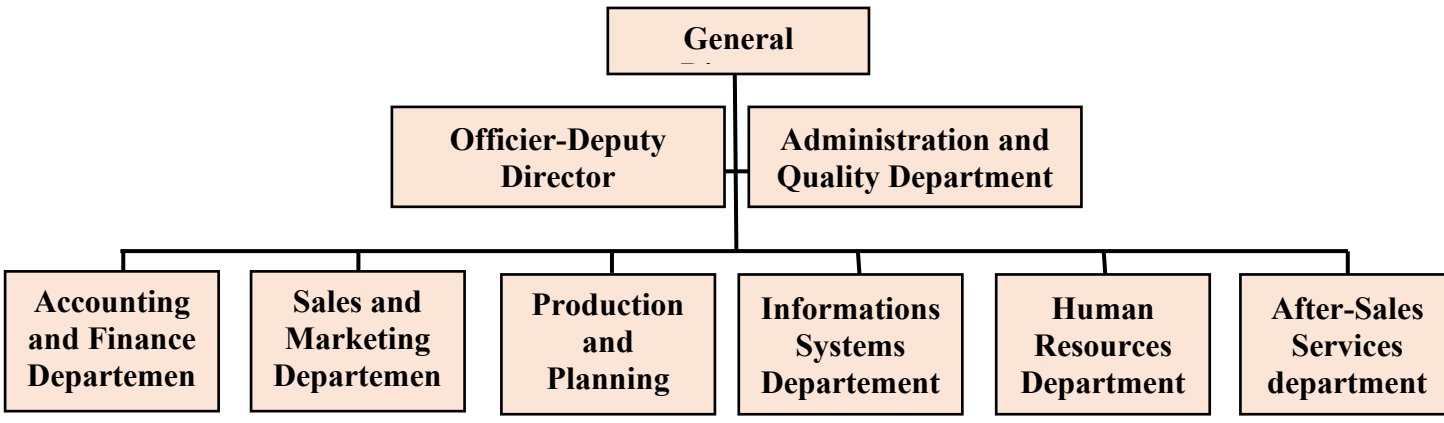
The SAMHA subsidiary is a strategic industrial unit of the Cevital Group, specialising in the manufacturing and distribution of electronic and household appliances. It was established as a centre for technological integration and localisation, notably through international partnerships—particularly with Haier—thereby positioning it as a key driver in modernising the group's industrial base, enhancing performance standards, and developing human competencies.
SAMHA's activities are structured around two main dimensions. At the commercial level, the subsidiary is responsible for distributing finished products through an extensive network, including Samsung Plaza and Cité Plaza stores, supported by after-sales services that have strengthened the brand's presence in the national market.
At the industrial level, the production facility located in Sétif has, since 2010, played a central role in assembling and manufacturing Samsung products under CKD (Completely Knocked Down) and SKD (Semi Knocked Down) schemes, while producing a diverse range of household appliances in accordance with modern industrial standards. Moreover, the subsidiary has contributed to the creation of more than 3,500 jobs, making it a notable model of integration between manufacturing and marketing, as well as a contributor to local economic development.

III.2. Organisational Structure of the SAMHA Subsidiary

The organisational structure of the SAMHA subsidiary constitutes a pivotal component embodying the managerial and strategic vision of its parent company, the Cevital Group. It is based on a well-defined hierarchical distribution of roles and responsibilities, ensuring functional coherence and operational efficiency across different departments.

This structure facilitates the integration of the subsidiary's two core dimensions—commercial and industrial—thereby reinforcing the overall effectiveness of its activities. At the same time, it fosters an organisational culture grounded in transparency, efficiency, and quality control.

Figure 3: Organisational Structure of the SAMHA subsidiary



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on internal documents provided by the SAMHA subsidiary.

The Information Systems Directorate at the SAMHA subsidiary plays a fundamental role in digitising administrative and technical processes through their analysis and the design of appropriate applications, ensuring the accuracy of data flow and processing. It is also responsible for providing and maintaining IT infrastructure, as well as updating systems and databases in line with the requirements of industrial and commercial activities. Furthermore, the directorate is in

charge of developing and maintaining various information systems that support management and planning processes within the organisation. In this regard, the Information Systems Directorate occupies a central position within the organisational structure, as it represents the technical backbone of the HRIS architecture and its primary operational pillar in competency management.

III.3. Presentation of the Information Systems Directorate of the SAMHA Subsidiary

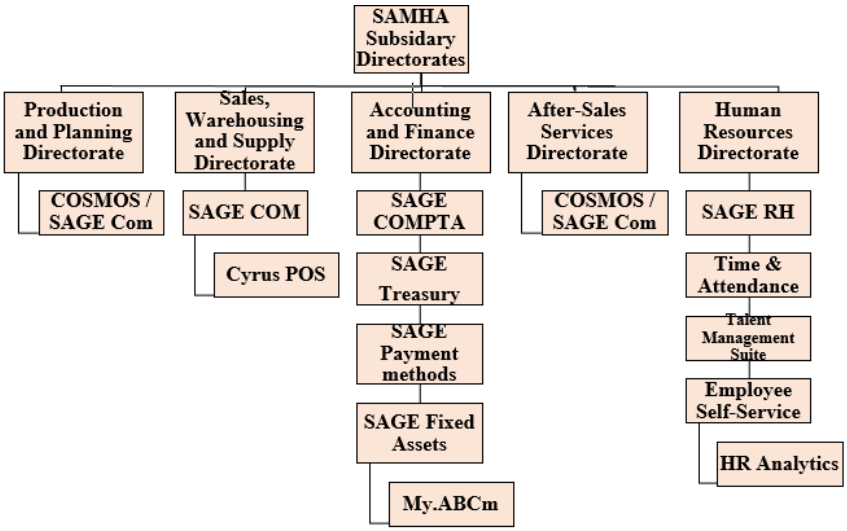
The Information Systems Directorate of the SAMHA subsidiary is considered one of the key pillars supporting strategic competency management. It is responsible for digitising processes and developing technological infrastructures in order to ensure the automation of functional and administrative activities, enhance data accuracy and circulation speed, and secure information resources. In doing so, it strengthens trust in the information system and supports the Human Resource Information System (HRIS). Beyond these technical operations, the directorate plays a key role in supporting decision-making processes by ensuring data reliability, system continuity, and the integration of specialised information systems aligned with the strategic needs of the organisation.
It also enhances employees' ability to comprehend the relationship between management functions and management information systems and to evaluate their effectiveness.
In addition, it fosters awareness of potential issues and appropriate solutions, thereby enabling employees to engage more effectively with the HRIS and actively contribute to sustaining the organisation's competitive advantage.

III.4. Human Resource Information Systems Deployed within the SAMHA Subsidiary

The SAMHA subsidiary of the Cevital Group is undergoing a significant transformation in its human resource management practices through the adoption of integrated information systems aimed at automating administrative processes and improving information flow in support of strategic competency management. With the evolution of the technological environment, the organisation increasingly relies on the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) as a central tool for collecting and analysing data to enable accurate decision-making in key areas such as recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and career planning.

This shift toward digitalisation is no longer merely a technical option but has become a strategic lever that allows the organisation to enhance the effectiveness of its human capital and strengthen its competitive position in the electronics and home appliances industry. From this perspective, the SAMHA subsidiary seeks to leverage information systems not only for administrative management purposes but also as a proactive and sustainable mechanism for competency management, in alignment with its broader objectives of organisational excellence and comprehensive digital transformation.

Figure 4: Information Systems Structure within the SAMHA Subsidiary of the Cevital Group



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on documents provided by the SAMHA subsidiary.

III.5. The Role of Human Resource Information Systems Deployed within the SAMHA Subsidiary in Supporting Strategic Competency Management

Building on the systems mapped in Figure 4, this section analyses the strategic contribution of each HRIS component to competency management at the SAMHA subsidiary. The following table presents these systems, their primary functional capabilities, and their strategic role in supporting competencies and competitive advantage

Table 1: Human Resource Information Systems Deployed at the SAMHA Subsidiary and Their Strategic Role in Competency Management

Category	Software Used	Primary Functional Capabilities	Strategic Role in Enhancing Competencies and Competitive Advantage
Integrated HR Management Suite	SAGE RH	Covers all HR functions including recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and leave management within an integrated database.	Establishes a comprehensive informational infrastructure for HR data access, supports evidence-based decision-making, and enables strategic alignment with organisational objectives.
Time & Attendance Management System	ZKTeco Time Management System	Monitors employee attendance, tracks working hours, and collects biometric data in real time.	Ensures real-time performance monitoring, supports productivity assessment, and reinforces a culture of accountability and organisational discipline.
Talent Management Suite	SAP SuccessFactors Talent Module	Manages recruitment, assessment, training, and career path planning.	Aligns individual competencies with organisational requirements, supports future competency development, and sustains long-term competitive advantage.
Employee Self-Service	Zoho People Self-Service Portal	Enables employees to access administrative data, manage leave requests, and generate payslips electronically.	Promotes transparency and self-responsibility, fostering organisational commitment and contributing to competency retention within the organisation.
HR Analytics	Microsoft Power BI	Analyses HR and supply data and generates analytical reports and interactive dashboards on workforce performance and competency indicators	Furnishes senior management with actionable strategic intelligence for data-driven decisions, supports strategic HR planning, and enhances human capital and competitive advantage

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on internal documents provided by the SAMHA subsidiary

The table reveals that the SAMHA subsidiary relies on five distinct yet complementary information systems for human resource management, each performing a specific function that contributes to building a knowledge base, reinforcing organisational discipline, managing talent, empowering employees, and generating strategic analytics. It should be noted that these systems currently operate as separate platforms, with data transfer between them carried out manually. The organisation is, however, actively working toward integrating them into a unified internal HRIS platform, with artificial intelligence technologies planned to support this transition. In this configuration, SAGE RH serves as the central infrastructure for data consolidation, while ZKTeco provides objective time-based indicators to support performance evaluation. SAP SuccessFactors establishes the strategic framework for talent management, Zoho People reinforces the participatory dimension through employee engagement and self-management capabilities, and Microsoft Power BI enables the transformation of data into actionable strategic insights. The value of these **platforms** lies not in their isolated functionalities, but in their interaction within a unified informational network that strengthens the effectiveness of strategic competency management within the organisation.

The information system architecture adopted at the SAMHA subsidiary demonstrates that the true value of a Human Resource Information System (HRIS) extends beyond its technical dimension to its capacity to establish functional and cognitive integration, thereby transforming it into a strategic mechanism for activating competency management. The integration of centralised data systems, time management tools, talent management platforms, self-service interfaces, and predictive analytics solutions creates a unified informational environment that provides a comprehensive and evolving view of both individual and collective capabilities.

Within this integrated framework, HRIS evolves from a mere data-processing tool into a knowledge infrastructure capable of generating precise performance indicators, supporting the identification of competency gaps, guiding training and development plans, and anticipating future workforce needs. Consequently, HRIS becomes an organisational actor that rationalises decision-making and directs human resource policies, reshaping the relationship between the organisation and its competencies by embedding a strategic logic focused on mobilising and leveraging knowledge-based capabilities as a sustainable source of competitive advantage.

Thus, HRIS emerges as a structural pillar in the architecture of competency management — not merely as a technical tool, but as a strategic system that redefines how organisations understand, evaluate, plan, and invest in their human capital.

III.6. Alignment Between HRIS Functions at the SAMHA Subsidiary and Their Support for the Four Dimensions of the KSAOs Model in Strategic Competency Management

While table 1 above highlighted the systems adopted and their operational functions, the question that arises is: to what extent do these systems contribute to supporting the dimensions of human competency in its full conceptual scope? To answer this question, the analysis necessitates systematically aligning the functions of HRIS within the SAMHA subsidiary with the four dimensions of the KSAOs model, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 2: Alignment Between HRIS Functions at SAMHA and the Four Dimensions of the KSAOs Model

HRIS within SAMHA	Primary Functional Capabilities	KSAOs Dimension Supported	Type of Strategic Support Directed at Competencies
Integrated HR	Consolidates employee	Knowledge	Provides a comprehensive and updatable

Management Suite — SAGE RH	records, manages leave, training, and performance appraisal within a centralised database		repository of organisational knowledge, ensuring the accumulation and sustainability of intellectual capital.
Time & Attendance Management System — ZKTeco	Monitors employee attendance and tracks temporal discipline and productivity	Skills	Reinforces professional commitment and organisational discipline, and contributes to improving employees' behavioural and professional performance.
Talent Management Suite — SAP SuccessFactors Talent Module	Manages recruitment, assessment, training, and career path planning	Abilities	Develops professional competency plans through Individual Development Plans (IDPs), ensuring alignment between individual capabilities and organisational objectives.
Employee Self-Service Portal — Zoho People	Enables employees to access administrative data, manage leave requests, and generate payslips electronically	Other Characte-ristics	Reinforces self-responsibility and job satisfaction, fostering a culture of trust, initiative, and organisational engagement.
Microsoft Power BI — HR Analytics	Analyses HR data and generates reports on performance and competencies	All Four KSAOs Dimensions	Transforms data into actionable strategic intelligence, supporting anticipatory planning for competencies and contributing to sustained competitive advantage.

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on internal documents provided by the SAMHA subsidiary.

The table 2 demonstrates that the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) at the SAMHA subsidiary is not deployed in its traditional operational capacity, but rather within a strategic vision that systematically supports the four dimensions of the KSAOs competency model.

It should be noted that the assignment of each system to a specific KSAOs dimension reflects its primary functional contribution rather than an exclusive one. In practice, overlaps exist between systems: for instance, SAGE RH, while primarily supporting the Knowledge dimension through data consolidation, also indirectly contributes to the Skills and Abilities dimensions through its performance appraisal and training management functions. Similarly, ZKTeco, primarily associated with the Skills dimension, also provides data that informs the Abilities dimension through productivity tracking. Microsoft Power BI is deliberately linked to all four KSAOs dimensions, as its analytical function synthesises outputs from all other systems, transforming them into integrated strategic intelligence. This classification should therefore be understood as reflecting primary functional contributions, acknowledging that the boundaries between dimensions are inherently fluid in an integrated competency management system.

As evidenced by the systems presented above, each platform contributes to a specific KSAOs dimension from knowledge consolidation and skills assessment to ability development and the cultivation of personal characteristics. Yet the substantive analytical contribution resides not in these discrete functions, but in their structural interdependence within a unified informational architecture.

Through this interaction, HRIS emerges as a transformative mechanism facilitating the transition from human resource administration to competency governance, whereby data enables the anticipation of gaps, the identification of critical competencies, and the guidance of recruitment, development, and planning policies all of which ensure the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage. Accordingly, HRIS evolves from a mere technical intermediary into a strategic actor

that weaves the relationship between competencies and organisational requirements, endowing human resource management with the capacity to make knowledge-driven decisions and cultivate a continuously evolving and adaptive workforce capable of innovation and responsiveness to the industrial and commercial challenges of the organisation's operating environment.

The findings of this empirical study reveal that the SAMHA subsidiary embodies a clear model of an organisation in which competency management has transitioned from a traditional administrative practice to a digitally-supported strategic system. The study has demonstrated that the value of HRIS lies not in the isolated functions of its constituent components, but in their interaction within a unified informational network that generates organisational knowledge amenable to strategic deployment. The integration of data collection, analysis, and utilisation enables the organisation to diagnose competency gaps, guide development plans, and anticipate future workforce needs-processes that are fundamental to transforming human capital from an administrative cost into a sustainable source of competitive advantage.

These findings confirm the study's initial premise: HRIS contributes to supporting strategic competency management through the achievement of horizontal integration across HR functions, and vertical integration between these functions and the organisation's strategic objectives — thereby consolidating its position as a structural pillar in the architecture of competency management, rather than a mere technical tool.

IV. Methods and Materials

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, which seeks to observe and analyse a given phenomenon as it manifests within its organisational reality, without intervening in its variables. The researcher opted for this methodological orientation with the aim of uncovering the operational mechanisms of the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) within the SAMHA subsidiary, and analysing its actual role in supporting strategic competency management. This approach enables an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within its specific industrial and organisational context. Regarding data collection instruments, the study relied on two complementary sources. The first comprised internal documents made available by the management of the SAMHA subsidiary, including organisational reports, job description cards, and specifications of the deployed information systems.

The second source consisted of semi-structured oral exchanges conducted with three senior staff members from the Human Resources Directorate and the Information Systems Directorate during a two-week fieldwork period carried out within the Group. The exchanges were guided by a set of open-ended questions focusing on: (1) the identification of HRIS tools currently deployed within the subsidiary; (2) the functional role of each system in daily HR operations; (3) the degree of integration between the deployed systems; and (4) the strategic applications of HRIS in supporting competency management. As the exchanges were conducted orally and were not recorded, key observations were noted by the researcher immediately following each session. These exchanges aimed at capturing the actual competency management practices implemented through HRIS, and at elucidating dimensions that are not formally documented in official records.

It should be noted that this study constitutes a single case study, which implies that its findings do not claim generalisability to other organisations. Rather, it seeks to provide a deep and contextualised understanding of a specific organisational case that exemplifies the relationship between HRIS and competency management within an Algerian industrial setting.

V. Results and Discussion

The present study is situated within the qualitative-exploratory research paradigm, wherein the data presented take the form of analytical classifications and descriptive observations systematically extracted from internal organisational documents and semi-structured interviews. This methodological orientation is consistent with the epistemological requirements of the single case study design adopted.

The empirical data collected reveal that the SAMHA subsidiary has instituted a coherent ecosystem of five specialised information systems, collectively addressing four major functional domains within human resource management. This configuration comprises: a centralised administrative data consolidation system (SAGE RH); a time and attendance monitoring system (ZKTeco); an integrated talent and career development platform (SAP SuccessFactors); an employee empowerment and self-management portal (Zoho People); and a strategic analytics and decision-support system (Microsoft Power BI).

The key informant from the Information Systems Directorate provided several significant insights regarding the HRIS architecture at SAMHA. He confirmed that the five deployed systems currently operate as distinct platforms, with data transfer between them carried out manually by HR staff. He further noted that the organisation is actively working toward integrating these systems into a unified internal HRIS platform, with artificial intelligence technologies planned to support this transition. He also indicated that HRIS already supports rapid and evidence-based recruitment processes through systematic data analysis, and enables the anticipation of future workforce needs, thereby contributing to proactive competency planning. A third informant confirmed that this integration project remains in a phase of active development, underscoring the subsidiary's commitment to building a fully unified informational infrastructure for strategic competency management.

With respect to the empirical findings, the analysis of Table 1 demonstrates that the HRIS architecture deployed at the SAMHA subsidiary tends toward horizontal integration across core HR functions — encompassing talent acquisition, performance appraisal, competency-based training, and career path planning — whereby each constituent component fulfils a distinct and complementary function. It should be noted, however, that this integration is not yet fully achieved; the five systems currently operate as distinct platforms with manual data transfer, and the organisation is actively working toward building a unified internal HRIS platform supported by artificial intelligence technologies. The analysis of Table 2 further substantiates that this integrated architecture provides comprehensive coverage of the four dimensions of the KSAOs model: SAGE RH underpins the Knowledge dimension (K) through structured data consolidation; ZKTeco reinforces the Skills dimension (S) via objective behavioural and temporal monitoring; SAP SuccessFactors advances the Abilities dimension (A) by linking developmental assessment with individualised career planning; and Zoho People cultivates the Other Characteristics dimension (O) by fostering autonomy, initiative, and organisational engagement. Microsoft Power BI, in turn, operates as a transversal integrative layer, synthesising outputs across all four dimensions into actionable strategic intelligence.

In light of these findings, the study's central hypothesis is substantiated: HRIS contributes significantly to strategic competency management by enabling functional integration across HR practices, supporting alignment with organisational strategic objectives, and systematically reinforcing the four dimensions of the KSAOs model. However, the empirical support for this

hypothesis is uneven across its components. The findings strongly corroborate the role of HRIS in horizontal and vertical integration of HR functions, the enhancement of competency management through data consolidation and process automation, and the comprehensive coverage of the KSAOs dimensions. By contrast, the claim that HRIS systematically transforms operational data into deployable organisational knowledge receives only partial empirical support, owing to the absence of longitudinal quantitative indicators capable of measuring the magnitude of impact on organisational performance outcomes.

This partial corroboration should not, however, be construed as a methodological shortcoming; rather, it reflects the inherent epistemological boundaries of a descriptive single case study conducted within a constrained fieldwork timeframe. Rigorously demonstrating the conversion of operational data into organisational knowledge, in its precise theoretical sense, would necessitate longitudinal quantitative measurement of key performance indicators both prior to and following HRIS deployment — a methodological requirement that exceeds the scope of the present study and constitutes a productive avenue for future empirical inquiry.

VI. Conclusion

This study sought to address a central research question: to what extent does the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) contribute to enhancing strategic competency management within organisations, and how does it enable the construction of a sustainable competitive advantage? The investigation yields a set of principal conclusions that respond to this problematic and enrich the academic discourse in the field of human resource management.

The first conclusion establishes that HRIS has undergone a fundamental transformation from a conventional administrative tool into a strategic knowledge infrastructure that reframes the organisation's conceptualisation of its human resources and competencies. The SAMHA case study demonstrates that the value of these systems resides not in their isolated functions, but in their complementary interaction within an emerging informational architecture. While the five platforms currently operate as distinct systems with manual data transfer, the organisation is actively working toward their integration into a unified internal HRIS platform supported by artificial intelligence technologies. This transition reflects a deliberate strategic commitment to transforming fragmented data sources into a coherent organisational knowledge infrastructure amenable to strategic deployment.

The second conclusion posits that neither horizontal integration across HR functions nor vertical integration between these functions and the organisation's strategic objectives can be fully achieved without a comprehensive and unified HRIS architecture. The SAMHA case illustrates that while individual systems may fulfil distinct HR functions effectively, the absence of full cross-system integration limits the organisation's capacity to generate seamless organisational knowledge flows — a gap that the subsidiary is currently working to address through its planned unified HRIS platform

The third conclusion pertains to the capacity of HRIS to provide holistic coverage of the four dimensions of the KSAOs model, thereby positioning it as a genuine enabling mechanism for competency governance rather than a mere technical intermediary for data processing. In light of these conclusions, the study advances a set of practical recommendations for Algerian industrial organisations. First, HRIS should be reconceptualised not as a technological investment but as an investment in human capital; organisations that effectively leverage these systems in service of their human competencies are those that genuinely possess the key to excellence and organisational

sustainability. Second, efforts should be directed toward strengthening inter-system integration through the development of a unified integrative interface that ensures uninterrupted information flow across HR functions. Third, the incorporation of anticipatory competency planning within the HRIS architecture would enable organisations to align their future workforce requirements with current training and recruitment strategies. Fourth, the development of a specialised social dashboard — incorporating quantitative indicators for measuring the actual impact of HRIS on competency levels and organisational performance — is strongly recommended. Nevertheless, this study is not without theoretical and empirical limitations, which must be acknowledged with scholarly integrity.

At the theoretical level, the referential framework was circumscribed to **the KSAOs framework as the primary analytical lens**, without incorporating complementary models that could further enrich the analysis of HRIS effectiveness. This delimitation opens productive avenues for future studies seeking to employ additional frameworks — such as information system success models or HR role models — in evaluating HRIS contribution to competency management. At the empirical level, the study was confined to a single industrial organisation within a specific Algerian context, which renders its findings non-generalisable to other sectors and organisational settings.

These limitations, in turn, delineate promising research horizons for scholars in the field of human resource management. There is a compelling need for quantitative studies measuring the relationship between the degree of HRIS deployment and organisational performance across multiple sectors in Algeria. Furthermore, the ongoing transition toward AI-augmented HRIS and big data analytics warrants in-depth investigation into its potential to transform competency management into a fully predictive and anticipatory process. Finally, the question remains open as to the extent to which Algerian organisations are culturally and organisationally prepared to absorb and strategically leverage this new generation of HRIS in support of their human capital strategies.

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