

# DIGITAL WELL-BEING TOWARDS LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE AMONG EMPLOYEES IN ORGANISATION

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(Received 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025; revised 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025; accepted 07<sup>th</sup> January 2026)

**Abstract.** This research paper explores the intersection of digital well-being, leadership dynamics, and emotional resilience among employees within organisational settings. As the workplace increasingly incorporates digital technologies, the impact of digital devices on employee well-being has gained prominence. This study examines how leadership styles and dynamics influence employees' experiences of digital well-being, focusing on emotional resilience outcomes. This study employed a quantitative survey method by analysing data from 411 employees in multinational organizations that used digital devices to perform their daily office tasks. Findings reveal that positive leadership dynamics significantly enhance digital well-being, improving employees' emotional resilience. Conversely, negative perceptions correlate with heightened stress and disengagement. Data were analysed using SPSS software version 29 in assessing the relationship between digital engagement, leadership support, and mental health indicators. The paper highlights the importance of fostering supportive leadership practices to promote digital well-being, ultimately contributing to healthier organisational environments. Recommendations for organisations to enhance leadership strategies and digital health initiatives are provided to ensure employee mental well-being in a digital age.

**Keywords:** *digital well-being, leadership dynamics, emotional resilience, employees, organisation*

## Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, employee well-being has emerged as a crucial element in organisational success. Since employee well-being has grown in importance, leaders must adjust to the challenges of technological change and give priority to developing encouraging and effective work environments in the face of digital innovation. Effective leadership in the digital era necessitates both technical expertise and the capacity to promote and improve the well-being of team members. Building on their influence, leaders are responsible for setting the tone and play a crucial role in influencing digital well-being by developing strategies that encourage responsible technology use and support employees in overcoming the difficulties presented by the digital workplace. Furthermore, leaders may reduce the possible negative consequences of digital engagement, such as stress and burnout, by encouraging behaviours that enhance well-being and emotional resilience (Shatha and Bajaba, 2024; Blankson, 2021; Agustina et al., 2020; Bakker et al., 2007). Leaders who emphasise digital well-being can create environments that improve emotional resilience, that is, the ability to adapt to stress and adversity, enabling employees to manage the demands of modern work life. Strategies leaders can adopt to emphasise digital well-being include fostering open and honest communication, demonstrating empathy, conduct training, and engaging in proactive problem-solving (Yang et al., 2024; Blankson, 2021). Strong emotional resilient workers are better able to withstand the

demands of constant digital engagement and the fast-paced environment of a tech-driven workplace (Kohn et al., 2023).

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of digital well-being and emotional resilience, studies on their intersection with leadership dynamics remain limited. This is especially true for multinational organisations that operate in highly digitalised contexts. This study aims to explore how leadership styles and dynamics influence digital well-being, focusing on fostering emotional resilience outcomes. It seeks to provide insights into the interplay between leadership strategies and employees' psychological adaptation to digital workspaces, addressing a critical gap in contemporary organisational research. The convergence of digital well-being, leadership dynamics, and emotional resilience is notably important as it affects both individual performance and the overall health of the company. This article analyses the tactics and techniques leaders may utilise to foster digital well-being and emotional resilience, hence enhancing a more dynamic and resilient workplace culture.

### *Literature review*

#### *Digital well-being in organisation settings*

The concept of digital well-being has gained significant attention as organisations increasingly rely on digital technologies to enhance productivity and streamline operations (Marsh et al., 2022). Defined as the impact of these technologies on leading a meaningful and balanced life, digital well-being is often contrasted with negative behaviours such as excessive use or addiction, which are commonly linked to digital ill-being (Abeele, 2021; Burr et al., 2020). In organisational settings, digital technologies are widely used for communication, managing tasks, and collaboration (Kraus et al., 2022). While these tools can improve efficiency among its employees, studies show that employees who frequently engage with digital devices for work are more likely to experience stress related connectivity and excessive workload such burnout, and demotivation (Marsh et al., 2024a; 2024b; Bunjak et al., 2021). Non-stop connectivity and information overload are now seen as common challenges that affect employees' well-being (Marsh et al., 2024a; Bunjak et al., 2021). Thus, strategic initiatives are needed to ensure digital tools are used in ways that support employee well-being rather than hinder them (Johnson et al., 2020). Organisations that fail to address these challenges often see declines in productivity and performance (Bourlakis et al., 2023; McParland and Connolly, 2019).

Conversely, well-designed digital interventions can improve employee well-being. For instance, organisations that prioritises work-life balance and promote occasional digital disconnections report greater levels of employee engagement and happiness (Marsh et al., 2022; Agustina et al., 2020; Pansu, 2018). Additionally, reducing the negative consequences of digital interaction can be achieved by offering training on effective digital tool usage and setting clear communication boundaries (Flanagin et al., 2010).

A comprehensive grasp of the ways in which digital tools interact with organisational cultures and employee behaviours is necessary for effective digital well-being strategies, emphasising the role that leadership plays in creating supportive environments. In this sense, leadership is crucial because a more positive workplace culture is created by leaders who set an example of balanced digital practices and assist employees in handling digital demands (Pontefract, 2024).

### ***Leadership and digital well-being***

Leadership styles play a major role in supporting employee's experiences of digital well-being (Larjovuori et al., 2016). Leadership in the digital era demands a profound blend of emotional resilience and a deep commitment to staff well-being. Digital leaders must embody vision and agility, guiding their teams through the complexities of technological transformation while safeguarding emotional and mental wellness (Tagscherer and Carbon, 2023). Effective leaders create environments where innovation thrives alongside well-being by balancing the fast-paced demands of digital change with a compassionate understanding of employee needs. They address the technical challenges of digitalisation and the psychological, social, and physical dimensions of workplace dynamics, fostering a culture of support and resilience that empowers individuals and organisations to excel (Duarte and Dias, 2023). Leadership dynamics, including transformational, ethical, and e-leadership approaches, have been shown to significantly impact employee well-being by promoting adaptability, reducing stress, and enhancing psychological safety (Maheshwari et al., 2024). Positive leadership behaviors, such as providing support, recognition, and fostering inclusivity, contribute to employee satisfaction and emotional well-being, particularly in the context of digital work environments (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2024). Research has highlighted that transformational leadership, which emphasizes vision, empathy, and motivation, positively impacts employee digital well-being. Transformational leaders encourage healthy digital practices by promoting boundaries between work and personal time, ensuring employees are not overburdened by the 'always-on' nature of digital communication tools (Tagscherer and Carbon, 2023).

In contrast, authoritarian or laissez-faire leadership styles may exacerbate digital stress, leading to burnout and reduced well-being. Digital leadership, a subset of transformational leadership, is defined by a leader's ability to navigate digital transformation while fostering an inclusive and supportive work culture (Wang et al., 2023). Leaders who embody digital leadership facilitate the integration of digital tools while mitigating risks associated with digital overload, such as constant connectivity and loss of personal time.

### ***Emotional resilience in organisations***

Emotional resilience, often described as the ability to adapt, recover, and thrive in the face of adversity, is critical for employees navigating the complexities of modern organisational environments (Murden et al., 2018; Bharwaney, 2015). Within the context of digital well-being and leadership dynamics, emotional resilience emerges as a vital factor influencing employee performance, engagement, and overall well-being. Resilience enables employees to handle pressures effectively, reducing burnout and improving productivity (Khammarnia et al., 2024). In the workplace, emotional resilience is not only a personal trait but also a skill that can be nurtured through supportive environments, effective leadership, and organisational policies (Murden et al., 2018). Stressful events in organisations may be caused by factors such as high workload, interpersonal conflicts, or rapid technological changes (Marsh et al., 2022). These challenges demand adaptive responses from employees, influenced by factors both within the employees' control, such as mindset and coping strategies, and beyond it, including organisational culture and leadership support. The digital workplace

introduces challenges of emotional resilience. Digital fatigue resulting from excessive screen time and constant connectivity can be seen as an increasing issue within the digital workplace (Hampel and Kunze, 2023). Employees often face information overload, blurred work-life boundaries and ‘always-on’ culture (Tagscherer and Carbon, 2023; McDowall and Kinman, 2017). Employees with higher levels of resilience, are able to adapt to these challenges and maintain their well-being despite the excessive pressures of digital environments (Liu et al., 2023).

## **Materials and Methods**

This deductive research applies a research survey among employees from selected multinational organisations in Klang Valley. The respondents were purposively selected to meet the following criteria: i) aged 20 until 60 years old. ii) employed by multinational organisations, and iii) digitally literate. Purposive sampling was used as this sampling method allows the researcher to select samples who meet the criteria listed above, which are specific and relevant to the study. This can help to ensure that the samples are highly relevant to the research objective, which can lead to more accurate and reliable findings for the study (Hossan et al., 2023).

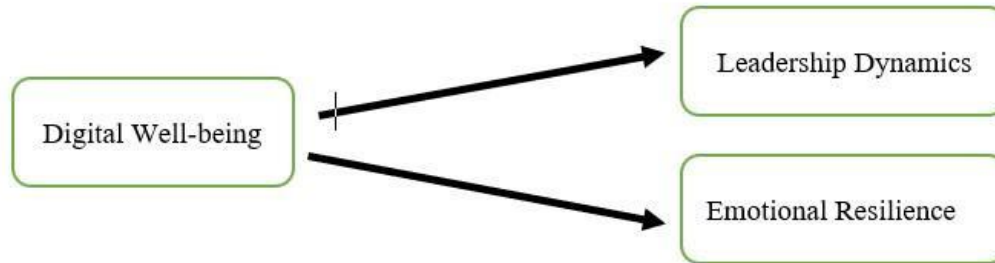
### ***Sampling***

Data were collected from October to December 2024 using a 40-item questionnaire administered via an online survey. Initially, 430 respondents participated; however, following rigorous data cleaning procedures, which verify the sample criteria. All duplicate data from the items will be eliminated to guarantee that each data point is unique and free from redundancy. A scatter plot is employed to ascertain the presence of any outliers within the data collection. Items with a factor loading below 0.6 will be eliminated. Data is routinely verified to confirm that all variables align with the study and that requisite data are provided. Straight lining was detected by looking for patterns from samples in their responses. The final sample comprised 411 respondents who met the established criteria.

### ***Measurement tool***

The questionnaire tool utilised for this study was adapted from various sources (Fischer et al., 2023; Kupiek, 2021) to determine the relationship of those who are digitally literate towards leadership dynamics and their emotional resilience. The questionnaire was distributed through an online survey for data collection. The questionnaire covered 11 items for digital well-being, 11 items for leadership dynamics, and 10 items representing emotional resilience. In addition, socio-demographic data such as gender, age group, department, organisational level, and types of organisation they are serving, besides their usage on digital media, was gathered as a part of the data collection. Reliability analysis was employed to assess reliable instruments to enhance the precision of the collected data, resulting in more credible and correct results. Through reliability analysis, Cronbach alpha’s value of more than 0.6 is acceptable for data collection (Kennedy, 2022). Data were analysed using SPSS software version 29 as it is the latest SPSS version that is useful for quantitative data analysis. SPSS was used to analyse the descriptive analyses, including the age group and most frequent digital platform utilised by respondents, were determined by frequencies and percentages for

variables. Pearson correlation was applied to determine the relationship between digital well-being towards leadership dynamics and emotional resilience. Identification of class intervals was also employed in order to identify the level for all variables (*Figure 1*).



**Figure 1.** Framework of digital well-being towards leadership dynamics and emotional resilience.

### Results and Discussion

The majority of the respondents (53.5%) were in the age group of 31–40 (*Table 1*). This age group was those who were the majority working in organisations. Referring to Statista in 2023, approximately 2.43 million employees from various organisations between the ages of 30 and 40 years old were employed in Malaysia, making it the largest age group of people in employment. Employees aged 30-40 years old also contributed to the majority of digital media usage in organisations. Ewing et al. (2019), mentioned that organisations with best practices in applying digital media will engage employees involving leadership and employees social advocates that relate to their emotional stability. The majority age group was followed by fresh graduates aged 20-30 (33.8%). By comparison, the least employed were those 51–60 years old (3.9%). Older employees aged 50 and above may have had less exposure to digital technologies throughout their careers compared to younger colleagues, leading to lower digital fluency (Hampel and Kunze, 2023). Digital fluency encompasses both digital knowledge and digital self-efficacy-the belief in one's ability to use digital tools effectively.

**Table 1.** Demographic profile of the respondent.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20-30	139	33.8
31-40	220	53.5
41-50	36	8.8
51-60	16	3.9
Frequent digital media used		
Facebook	64	15.7
X	67	16.3
Instagram	73	17.8
Tik Tok	86	20.8
LinkedIn	90	21.9
Snapchat	31	7.5
Digital well-being		
High	71	17.3

Moderate	298	72.5
Low	41	10.2
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Leadership dynamics		
High	12	2.9
Moderate	252	61.3
Low	147	35.8
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Emotional resilience		
High	19	4.6
Moderate	294	71.5
Low	98	23.8
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LinkedIn emerged as the predominant digital platform utilised by organisations, accounting for 21.9%, followed by TikTok and Instagram (*Table 1*). Recent trends indicate that organisations extensively utilise social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and X (previously Twitter) for marketing, consumer engagement, and internal communications. LinkedIn remains the premier medium for professional networking, while Instagram and Facebook are favoured for brand promotion and visual content (Auxier and Anderson, 2021). Numerous organisations are progressively utilising YouTube for content marketing and TikTok to engage younger digital users. LinkedIn is specifically tailored for professional networking and career advancement, rendering it an ideal platform for organisational use (Cho and Lam, 2021). In contrast to other social media sites that emphasise personal relationships and entertainment, LinkedIn offers a venue for professionals to network, exchange industry knowledge, and investigate career prospects (Davis et al., 2020). This emphasis corresponds with the organisation's objectives of promoting professional development and teamwork. The finding reveals that the majority (72.5%) of the staff in organisations have a moderate level of digital well-being due to their increased screen time. Many employees are willing to spend their amounts of time on digital devices, which can lead to digital fatigue and might negatively impact their mental health. Digital wellbeing, marked by exhaustion and diminished productivity due to extended digital interaction, is an escalating issue in the workplace (George, 2024). Findings indicate that prolonged screen exposure might result in digital tiredness, adversely affecting mental health. Digital well-being is often caused by prolonged screen time that can lead to several symptoms such as eye discomfort, headaches, overall tiredness, and emotional resilience (Nakshine et al., 2022). These symptoms can affect daily work tasks and overall well-being. Extended screen exposure, particularly in the absence of sufficient pauses, might intensify these symptoms and lead to a deterioration in general well-being (*Table 1*).

Leadership dynamics shows a moderate level of leadership (61.3%) towards digital well-being in organisations (*Table 1*). Different leadership styles, such as autocratic, democratic, transformational, and transactional, impact how digital well-being is managed. Walter (2024) agreed that leaders who are not well-versed in digital tools or who do not prioritise digital well-being may contribute to moderate levels of support and guidance to their employees. Leaders might need proper communication channels to enhance digital well-being in the organisation. Effective communication is crucial for leadership dynamics. Leaders who maintain open lines of communication and encourage feedback are better able to support digital well-being (Burr et al., 2020). Conversely, poor communication can lead to misunderstandings and moderate levels of

digital well-being. Monteiro and Joseph (2023) mentioned that improving leadership dynamics through better training, fostering a supportive culture, and ensuring effective communication can help enhance digital well-being among employees in organisations. Employees experienced a moderate level (71.5%) of emotional resilience related to digital overload due to constant exposure to digital devices and information leading to digital fatigue, making it harder for employees to maintain a high level of emotional resilience (*Table 1*). The support systems from the organisations, including access to mental health resources and training on digital well-being, play a vital role in supporting employees in managing their emotions towards adapting to digital devices in the workplace. Inadequate support results in only a moderate level of emotional resilience. On the condition of enhancing emotional resilience among employees, organisations can improve digital well-being initiatives, provide better support, and foster a positive organisational culture (Ajayi and Udeh, 2024).

Findings from *Table 2* reveal that digital well-being has a significant and moderate relationship with leadership dynamics and emotional resilience among employees in the organisation ( $r=0.580$ ,  $p<0.05$ .  $r=0.477$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Moderate relationships between digital well-being, leadership dynamics, and emotional resilience among employees are attributed to effective digital leadership, which involves guiding their teams through digital transformation, which can be challenging. Leaders who possess strong digital skills will create a supportive digital culture that tends to enhance employees' digital well-being (Chatterjee et al., 2023). Although leaders might lack some of the skills, they still can lead to moderate levels of digital well-being among employees. Digital well-being significantly impacts emotional resilience, although at a moderate level. Employees who manage their digital interactions well are better equipped to handle stress and adapt to changes. However, constant connectivity and digital overload can strain emotional resilience, leading to only a moderate level of digital well-being. Organisations might need to focus on other factors related to individual differences and organisational support through comprehensive digital well-being programs, supportive leadership (Trenerry et al, 2021) and fostering a positive digital culture that can help to improve the overall relationship between digital well-being, leadership dynamics, and emotional resilience.

**Table 2.** Relationship between digital well-being towards leadership dynamics and emotional resilience in organisations.

Variable	Digital well-being	
	r-value	p-value
Leadership dynamnics	0.580	.001
Emotional resilience	0.477	.001

Based on the results, it can be seen that organisations must develop strategies that could enhance digital skills among its employees. The strategies should be suitable to be adopted across demographics. For instance, it can be seen that employees in the age group 31-40 who are typically at the peak of their professional careers, are heavily engaged with digital media compared to other age groups. Their active involvement in digital media reinforces the importance of digital well-being initiatives that are tailored to their needs. These initiatives can enhance their ability to navigate digital spaces effectively while mitigating the risks of digital fatigue and emotional strain.

### ***The role of leadership in supporting digital well-being***

The results of this study align with existing literature that indicates leadership plays a critical role in supporting digital well-being within organisations especially as the workplace becomes more reliant on digital tools as well as technologies. With findings underscore the moderate levels of digital well-being (72.5%), leadership dynamics (61.3%), and emotional resilience (71.5%) among employees, show the pressing need for leaders to develop relevant strategies as previously mentioned. Digital well-being involves creating a well-balanced of usage of digital tools that can increase productivity in the workplace and ensures that the tools do not lead to well-being issues such as burnout, fatigue, or stress. As organisations are increasingly relying on technological tools to function, leaders must ensure that these tools are integrated successfully within the day-to-day work of their employees but also ensure that the mental well-being of employees are not affected by the changes brought. Findings also highlight on the importance of leadership styles in supporting employee digital well-being. It was found that different leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic, transformational, and transactional have an impact on how digital well-being is managed. This is similar to the study conducted by Maheshwari et al. (2024). They indicated that leaders who adopt more transformational, ethical, or e-leadership approaches would be able to promote adaptability, help reduce stress, and enhance psychological safety among their employees (Maheshwari et al., 2024). Transformational leadership has been linked to better outcomes in digital well-being and those who adopts this style would improve employee efficiency and satisfaction (Maheshwari et al., 2024; Tagscherer and Carbon, 2023; Antonopoulou et al., 2021). In addition, they are those who would more likely promote work-life balance (Khan et al., 2020).

Current findings also suggest that leaders must be well-versed in digital tools and prioritise digital well-being to support their employees (Ahuja et al., 2023). As mentioned previously, Tagscherer and Carbon (2023) believe that effective digital leadership requires a blend of both emotional resilience and commitment to employee well-being. In addition, leaders who encourage balanced use of technology, respect for work-life boundaries, and open communication can create a work environment that allows employees feel supported and reduce the pressure of digital work environments (Duarte and Dias, 2023).

### ***Improving digital skills among employees***

Findings also show that younger employees (20-30 years) and older workers (51-60 years) differ significantly in their level of digital fluency. This may be due to limited exposure to digital tools throughout older employees' career compared to younger employees who are more digitally adept. However, younger employees are seen vulnerable to digital fatigue due to excessive screen time and connectivity demands. With more than half of employees reporting moderate digital well-being, the findings also highlight a pressing need for organisations to ensure that employees improve in digital skills, and at the same time, prevent them from experiencing digital overload. The ability to effectively use digital tools in today's technology-driven workplace, is important. Employees with higher digital fluency are able to demonstrate better emotional resilience, enabling them to adapt to the pressures of digital work environments. Thus, to guarantee inclusive involvement in digital workflows, specific digital skill-building initiatives are required, especially for senior employees. Hampel and Kunze (2023) had indicated that digital fluency, which comprises both knowledge and self-efficacy, is important for workplace adaptation and engagement. By providing

employees with the digital skills they require through training, organisations can improve the overall workplace experience of their employees (Monteiro and Joseph, 2023). Tailored training programs according to employee demographics are essential as older employees could benefit from foundational digital skills training compared to younger employees who may benefit from advanced tools (Bergson-Shilcock, 2020). Tailored programs could also bridge the digital divide that organisations are currently facing (Hampel and Kunze, 2023).

### ***Promoting emotional resilience in the digital workplace***

Another strategy that organisations can implement is to promote emotional resilience. The current study shows that 71.5% of employees demonstrated moderate levels of emotional resilience and this was mainly caused by digital fatigue and inadequate organisational support. Prolonged screen time, digital overload, and lack of mental health support have prevented employees from managing their stress effectively. Tagscherer and Carbon (2023) had highlighted that organisations must integrate mental health resources into digital well-being initiatives to bolster emotional resilience. Being emotionally resilient can reduce digital fatigue, enhance well-being, and allow employees to cope with technological demands (Maheshwari et al., 2024; Murugan and Natarajan, 2022). Furthermore, structured breaks and digital policies can also combat digital fatigue (Hampel and Kunze, 2023; Sanchez-Segura et al., 2023). Tagscherer and Carbon (2023) also stressed that resilient employees are able to thrive amidst the challenges of digital transformation. As mentioned previously, leaders play a vital role in supporting their employees. Leaders can impact emotional resilience by creating supportive and inclusive work environments. The study's findings show that positive leadership dynamics can reduce stress and build psychological safety among employees. Transformational leaders, in particular, can foster resilience among its employees by motivating them and recognizing their digital efforts (Duarte and Dias, 2023).

### **Conclusion**

The interplay between digital well-being, leadership dynamics, and emotional resilience is complex and multifaceted. The findings indicate that organisations are moderately committed to digital well-being, with leadership dynamics scoring 61.3%. Employees report a moderate level of emotional resilience at 71.5%, suggesting challenges in maintaining high resilience due to digital overload and fatigue. Notably, digital well-being shows a significant and moderate correlation with both leadership dynamics ( $r=0.580$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and emotional resilience ( $r=0.477$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), underscoring the interconnectedness of these factors in organisational settings. The insights from this study underscore the pivotal role of leadership in promoting digital well-being and supporting employees' emotional resilience amid the challenges posed by constant digital exposure. Leaders who prioritize digital well-being can help mitigate the adverse effects of digital overload, thereby enhancing overall employee resilience. This is particularly important as digital transformation reshapes workplace dynamics, necessitating adaptive leadership strategies to foster a supportive and resilient organizational culture. In the digital era, leadership extends beyond traditional management practices to encompass a deep understanding of digital tools and their impact on employee well-being. Leaders are now expected to be digitally savvy,

updates with the latest technology. This shift requires leaders to develop new competencies and embrace a mindset that values empathy, inclusion, and adaptability.

Furthermore, leaders who exhibit digital leadership skills play a crucial role in mitigating the negative effects of technostress by fostering an empowering work environment, thereby enhancing employee engagement and innovation. Digital leaders who foster a culture of innovation, adaptability, and open communication can inspire employees to think creatively and develop novel ideas, effectively countering the adverse effects of technostress. Moreover, promoting emotional resilience through supportive leadership and organisational practices is essential in helping employees navigate the challenges of digital transformation more effectively. Leadership qualities such as effective communication, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and the ability to foster trust and autonomy are critical for navigating contemporary challenges. By embracing these attributes, leaders can create a supportive environment that enables employees to adapt to digital disruptions and leverage technology for innovation and growth. By focusing on enhancing digital leadership skills, implementing targeted training programs, and promoting emotional resilience, organisations can better navigate the complexities of the digital age, ensuring both employee well-being and organisational success. This approach not only addresses the immediate challenges posed by digital transformation but also positions the organisation for sustained growth and competitiveness in an increasingly digital world.

In conclusion, to effectively address digital fatigue and bolster emotional resilience, organisations should focus on strengthening leadership dynamics that prioritize digital well-being. By doing so, organisations can create a more supportive environment that enables employees to navigate the demands of the digital era more effectively. Future research should explore the long-term effects of digital tool reliance on employee well-being and examine the efficacy of specific leadership strategies in mitigating digital fatigue and enhancing emotional resilience.

### **Acknowledgement**

This research did not receive any specific grant from public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agencies.

### **Conflict of interest**

This study was independently conducted by the authors without external funding or commercial involvement. No conflicts of interest are declared.

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