

Navigating Employee Well-Being in the Age of Digital Transformation: A PRISMA-Based Systematic Review

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Abstract

Digital transformation constantly changes the work practices and employee experiences of contemporary work environments. Studies have documented the adverse impact of cutting-edge technologies, such as artificial intelligence, algorithmic systems, and digital platforms on employees' well-being. However, such findings remain fragmented across technologies, disciplines, and well-being constructs, limiting a coherent understanding of how digitally transformed work conditions affect employees. This study systematically reviews the literature on digital transformation and employee well-being to clarify the conditions, mechanisms, and outcomes that are most consistently identified in prior research. Using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method, this study identified, screened, and selected 57 peer-reviewed articles (2014–2025) on digital transformation and employee well-being. The Gioia inductive analytical approach was used to synthesise the reviewed studies and to develop higher-order conceptual dimensions. Five interrelated aggregate dimensions were identified: digital transformation conditions, digital resources and demands, mediating processes, contextual factors, and employee well-being outcomes. The findings indicate that employee well-being depends significantly on how digitally intensified demands and available resources are configured, interpreted, and mediated within specific organisational contexts. This review highlights the need for more temporally sensitive, context-specific, and resource-oriented research, and proposes an integrative framework to guide future research and support the design of healthier and sustainable digital workplaces.

Keywords: digital transformation; digital well-being; employee well-being; future of work; technostress



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1. Introduction

Digital transformation, driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0), has become a defining feature that is profoundly reshaping how work is designed, managed, and experienced in contemporary organisations [1–3]. Firms seek to enhance their dynamic capabilities and competitiveness through advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), algorithmic management systems, collaborative platforms, and big data analytics [4,5]. While the adoption of these technologies contributes to productivity gains and new forms of value creation, their consequences for employee well-being remain

complex and contested, positioning well-being as a critical human resource management (HRM) challenge within digitalised workplaces [6,7].

Employee well-being encompasses the psychological, physical, and social functioning of employees and their quality of work–life [8,9]. Within HRM, concerns that organisations give insufficient priority to employee well-being have long been a recurring and central discourse [10–12]. Scholars have strongly debated over performance-oriented systems (e.g., high-involvement work and high-performance work systems) [13,14]; whether they enhance or undermine employees' well-being and quality of life [10–12]. This tension remains highly relevant in digitally transformed workplaces, where organisations frequently pursue performance, flexibility, and innovation through fast-evolving data-driven and digitally mediated forms of work [15,16]. Although such developments are considered as strategic imperatives for organisations' survival and success [17], they may also radically alter employees' job designs, competencies, work arrangements, and surveillance mechanisms, which can marginalise employees' well-being [17–19]. This creates a managerial dilemma that nudges for more nuanced and proactive strategies to implement digital transformation and manage its implications for employee well-being [15,20–22].

In response, research on digital transformation and employee well-being has expanded rapidly across multiple disciplines, such as organisational behaviour, information systems, HRM, and psychology [20,23,24]. More recently, this discussion has been increasingly linked to the notion of digital well-being, which refers to the extent to which individuals can maintain psychological, emotional, and social functioning while engaging with digital technologies at work [25,26]. Importantly, this perspective moves beyond a narrow focus on the absence of pathogenic or negative effects (e.g., technostress) to encompass the dynamic state formed by how digital demands, job resources, individual capabilities, and contextual conditions jointly shape employee experiences in technology-mediated work settings, mainly through salutogenic (i.e., health-promoting) approaches [2,27]. Despite this growth, the digital well-being literature remains conceptually dispersed and empirically uneven [28].

1.1. Problem Statement

A central challenge pertaining to the current digital transformation and employee well-being research is the fragmented body of knowledge. Empirical research has examined specific digital transformation conditions, such as information and communication technology (ICT) use, technostress, and digitalisation, often linking them to different well-being outcomes, namely job satisfaction, work exhaustion, productivity, and mental health. For example, technostress research has shown that technology-related stressors, such as overload, invasion, complexity, and uncertainty—which emerge from technology use or digitalisation—are associated with employee mental strain and burnout [29,30]. More recent studies extend this discussion to cutting-edge forms of digital transformation, such as AI, machine-learning, algorithmic control, and remote work deployment.

The research evidence uncovers new demands that these technologies engender for employees, including insecurity, fear of displacement, AI anxiety, and constant availability, along with potential benefits, such as flexibility, autonomy, and improved work design [31,32]. However, due to the significant variation in the ways these studies define digital transformation and operationalise employee well-being, the field remains fragmented across technologies, contexts, outcomes, and theoretical perspectives.

Similarly, review studies have largely approached the topic through a relatively narrow lens. Some reviews focus primarily on technostress and ICT exposure, underlining the negative health and work-related consequences of techno-overload, techno-invasion, and other technology-induced stressors [33,34]. Several scholars concentrate on remote

work or teleworking, examining their implications for psychological well-being, physical health, work–life balance, and performance [35]. While other reviews examined AI deployment and workplace digital transformation more broadly, gauging organisational readiness and digital transformation processes (e.g., firm-level strategies, barriers and outcomes) [24,36,37].

Taken together, the current literature indicates an important, yet unresolved gap. Empirical research has spawned valuable but often siloed insights into particular technologies, stressors and well-being outcomes, while review studies tend to synthesise selected or narrower aspects of this evidence, frequently constrained by specific technologies, work arrangements, sectors, or outcome domains. Existing findings, therefore, remain dispersed and insufficiently integrated, resulting in a fundamental shortcoming: the lack of a coherent and systematic explanation of the pathways through which digital transformation shapes employee well-being.

Such an approach is critical and timely because digital transformation is no longer a peripheral organisational change, but a central feature of contemporary work, intensified by widespread investment and adoption of AI, automation, digital platforms, remote and hybrid work arrangements [38]. Concurrently, employee well-being has become a growing global concern within the paradoxical context of workplace digital transformation [2]. That is, poorly managed digital transformation initiatives may intensify stress, overload, fatigue, resistance, and work–life conflict among employees, whereas well-designed digital work systems may enhance autonomy, flexibility, engagement, and resilience. The absence of an integrated synthesis that explains the diverse conditions of digital transformation in current workplaces, alongside the potential factors contributing to this dual nature, therefore, may risk practitioners and scholars to treat digital transformation either as a solely technological or business issue or as an isolated source of technostress, thereby overlooking the intricate pathways through which digital shift affects employees.

To address this gap, the present review, guided primarily by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, explains employee well-being through two complementary processes: a health impairment process, in which excessive job demands contribute to strain and ill-being, and a motivational process, where job resources foster engagement, satisfaction, and positive functioning [39]. Furthermore, the JD-R model is flexible across diverse occupational settings and explicitly accommodates both negative and positive indicators of employee well-being. In the realm of digital transformation, this theoretical lens enables examining digital technologies, AI adoption, remote work designs, and digitised work processes not merely as technological changes, but as sources of demands and resources that may influence employee well-being through different mechanisms. A socio-technical perspective further complements this lens by recognising that employee experiences of digital transformation are configured by the interaction between technological systems, work design, organisational practices, and human factors [6,40].

Together, these perspectives help establish a broader inquiry into how digital transformation affects employee well-being as an outcome shaped by the configuration of demands, resources, mediating processes, and contextual factors. Positioning employee well-being at the centre of digital transformation is also critical in light of Society 5.0 and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3. Society 5.0 underlines the importance of aligning technological progress with human well-being [41]. Equally, SDG 3 emphasises the need to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all [42].

1.2. Purpose of the Study and Objectives

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to systematically synthesise the literature on digital transformation and employee well-being in order to clarify the work

conditions, demands, resources, mechanisms, and contexts through which digital transformation shapes employee well-being. This review examines digital transformation as a set of workplace conditions that reconfigure employees' experiences of work, and consequently, their well-being outcomes. Accordingly, this review addresses the following objectives:

- To identify the key digital transformation conditions that shape employee well-being outcomes.
- To synthesise the types of demands and resources that are most consistently highlighted in digitally transformed work environments.
- To identify the mediating pathways through which the demands and resources of digitally transformed work environments predict employee well-being outcomes.
- To identify the contextual factors that influence employees' experiences of digital transformation.
- To determine the representation of employee well-being outcomes as conceptualised in the existing digital transformation literature.

To achieve these objectives, this study performed a systematic literature review following the established Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Subsequently, the Gioia methodology was used as an inductive strategy for conceptual synthesis. This combined approach enables the review to gather literature systematically and organise heterogeneous findings into a structured analytical framework. This review inductively integrates fragmented empirical and conceptual findings to develop a structured understanding of how digital transformation has been theorised and empirically examined in the context of employee well-being.

This study makes a distinct contribution in three ways. First, it moves beyond narrower reviews centred on single technologies or isolated well-being outcomes by synthesising the broader digital transformation-employee well-being literature. Second, it adopts the JD-R model as the primary theoretical lens, while also incorporating insights from the socio-technical view to capture both resource-related and strain-related pathways that occur within the interaction between technological systems, work design, organisational practices, and human factors. Third, it develops an integrative conceptual framework grounded in the reviewed literature to show how digital transformation conditions, digital demands and resources, mediating processes, contextual factors, and employee well-being outcomes are connected.

This article is organised as follows. Section 1 introduces this study. Section 2 outlines the methodological approach of the systematic literature review. Section 3 presents the main findings of this review. Section 4 discusses the proposed conceptual framework, its contributions, and future research directions. Section 5 discusses the implications for theory and practice, and Section 6 presents the conclusion.

2. Materials and Methods

This study performed a systematic literature review (SLR) following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines [43]. A review protocol was developed, as depicted in Table S1.

The protocol was not registered in a public registry (e.g., OSF, PROSPERO), and this is acknowledged as a methodological limitation. Although protocol registration is recommended to enhance transparency and reduce the risk of selective reporting or post hoc methodological decisions [43,44], several procedures were implemented to support reproducibility and methodological rigour. The research question, eligibility criteria, database selection, search strategy, screening procedure, data extraction framework, PRISMA flow diagram, quality appraisal, and synthesis approach were defined before the final synthesis was undertaken. This reporting approach emphasises transparency, reproducibility, justifi-

cation of methodological decisions, and reflection on validity and reliability in business and management research [43,45,46].

Given that the main objective of this article is to systematically review the existing literature examining the association between digital transformation and employee well-being, the following overarching research question was formulated in the initial phase to guide the entire SLR methodology: What is known about the relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being in existing literature?

2.1. Planning and Search Strategy

In the identification phase, the keywords were developed from the core concepts of the review, namely digital transformation and employee well-being. Related synonyms and term variations were identified through published studies, database keywords suggestions, online thesauri, and expert input [47]. The initial search string was then refined iteratively using Boolean operators, truncation, and repeated testing to improve sensitivity and conceptual fit [47,48]. The final search string used in Scopus is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Search string used in Scopus for SLR.

Database	Keywords Used for Searching (Search String)
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (((("Digital transformation" OR "Digital technolog*" OR "technology us*" OR "digital technology us*" OR "digital media us*" OR "digital connectivity" OR "mobile connectivity" OR "digital communication" OR "digital engagement" OR "Digital platform*" OR "digital tools" OR "online media us*" OR "Social media us*" OR "social networking sites" OR "electronic media us*" OR "internet media us*" OR "internet us*" OR "web-based media us*" OR "enterprise social networks" OR "professional networking sites" OR "information and communication technologies" OR "ICTs" OR "collaboration tools" OR "online applications" OR "electronic devices" OR "smartphone us*" OR "screen time" OR "screentime" OR "screen-based activities" OR "online activities" OR "digital activities" OR "virtual activities") OR ("Industry 4.0" OR "IR4.0" OR "I4.0" OR "4th industrial revolution" OR "fourth industrial revolution" OR "internet of things" OR "cyber physical*" OR "IoT" OR "big data" OR "artificial intelligence" OR "generative AI" OR "I5.0" OR "Industry 5.0" OR "fifth industrial revolution" OR "5th industrial revolution") AND ("digital well*" OR "online well*" OR "employee well*" OR "psychological well* in digital context" OR "digital psychological well*" OR "subjective wellbeing and technology" OR "tech-life balance" OR "digital health" OR "mental health related to digital use" OR "digital overwhelm" OR "work-life balance in digital environment" OR "technostress" OR "conscious use of technology" OR "state of satisfaction with digital technology" OR "cyber well*" OR "mental health impacts" OR "anxiety" OR "depression" OR "sleep quality" OR "sleep problems" OR "work stress" OR "burnout" OR "psychological impacts" OR "job satisfaction" OR "work performance" OR "employee retention" OR "absenteeism" OR "presenteeism" OR "job security" OR "organi* effectiveness") AND ("employees" OR "workforce" OR "personnel" OR "staff" OR "workers" OR "remote employees" OR "remote workers" OR "digital workers" OR "knowledge workers" OR "office workers" OR "professionals" OR "white-collar workers" OR "virtual team members" OR "workers in digital environment*")))) AND (EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "MEDI") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "COMP") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "ENGI") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "ECON") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "HEAL") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "NURS") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "DECI") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "MATH") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "BIOC") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "ENVI") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "ENER") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "PHYS") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "PHAR") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "CENG") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "AGRI") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "MATE") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "IMMU") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "EART") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "CHEM") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "DENT") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "VETE")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))

Note: In the search string, the symbol (*) denotes a wildcard character in Scopus, allowing the retrieval of multiple variants of a term.

The search strategy was developed to align with the review question and to maintain a balanced breadth and conceptual focus. In line with the systematic review guidance in business and management research, the review process was designed to be transparent and reproducible by clearly reporting database searched, search terms, keywords, screening criteria, and inclusion/exclusion procedures [45,46]. Accordingly, the present review prioritised terms directly associated with the relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being. Digital transformation was conceptualised as a broader process of technology-enabled organisational changes occurring over time [24,37], rather than as a direct synonym for specific digital work arrangements or as static conditions like digitisation and digitalisation; unless they were captured through broader digital technology or employee-related search terms. Accordingly, adjacent terms such as remote work, telework,

work from home, and agile work were not included as primary search terms because they describe work arrangements or work-design practices that may be digitally enabled but do not necessarily indicate broader organisational transformation [49,50].

Employee well-being was also operationalised broadly to capture its multidimensional nature in terms of psychological, physical, occupational, and work-related outcomes. Nevertheless, excluding adjacent terms may have limited the breadth and sensitivity of the search strategy of this review and is, therefore, acknowledged as a methodological limitation [44–46].

Scopus was selected as the principal database for this review because it provides extensive interdisciplinary coverage of peer-reviewed literature across the fields most relevant to the topic, including management, human resource management, organisational studies, psychology, and information systems [51]. Prior methodological comparisons of academic search systems have consistently identified Scopus as one of the most reliable bibliographic sources for systematic reviews and have highlighted its strong journal coverage, inclusion of diverse document types, and wide geographical representation in comparison with other academic search systems [52–54]. In addition, comparative studies have shown substantial overlap between Scopus and other prominent databases, such as Web of Science, while also suggesting that Scopus indexes a broader range of sources in some areas, including conference proceedings and other non-journal materials that are relevant in rapidly evolving research domains [54].

On this basis, Scopus was used as the principal indexed database in this review. The search was conducted in April 2025, using the final set of keywords and search strings (see Table 1). An initial unrestricted search returned 6090 records. To align the retrieval with the scope of the review, filters were then applied to limit results to English-language publications and to exclude subject areas outside the intended disciplinary focus. After applying these filters (as presented in Table 1), the Scopus search yielded 1023 records. During record management, 162 duplicate or overlapping entries and 3 records (1 erratum and 2 retracted articles) were removed from the Scopus export, leaving 858 records for title-and-abstract screening. In addition, Google Scholar was used as a supplementary source for manual searching and citation tracing in order to improve retrieval sensitivity [47,48]. This supplementary search identified 24 additional records. These records were assessed separately at the full-text stage using the same eligibility criteria applied to the Scopus-derived records. This reporting is consistent with the distinction between principal database searching and records identified through other methods in the PRISMA 2020 framework [43]. Nevertheless, reliance on one principal indexed database may have limited the breadth of coverage and is, therefore, acknowledged as a methodological limitation of the review.

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In this review, studies that have examined digital transformation and employee well-being, or closely related constructs, within workplace, organisational, HRM, management, or related employment contexts were included. Given the interdisciplinary and rapidly evolving nature of the topic, the review included peer-reviewed journal articles, reviews, and conceptual papers, as well as conference proceedings that have addressed the review question directly and met the same substantive eligibility criteria. Conference proceedings were included to avoid excluding potentially relevant emerging evidence from digital work research, where important findings may initially appear in conference outlets prior to subsequent journal publication [55,56]. Only English-language manuscripts were included to ensure accessibility, consistency of appraisal, and comparability across studies [47,57].

No temporal restriction was imposed on the search strategy, and no publication-year filter was applied during the database search in order to maximise coverage and capture both foundational and recent developments in the literature [58]. Accordingly, the temporal span reported in the Section 3 represents the publication years of the final included studies, and not a time window imposed at the search or eligibility stage. Studies were excluded if they focused solely on technical systems design, engineering performance, algorithm development, healthcare delivery, patient outcomes, or other non-workplace contexts without examining employee well-being in relation to digital transformation. Hence, the eligibility criteria were designed to retain studies that addressed the human, organisational, and work design implications of digital transformation on employee well-being domains. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used in this review are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria used in screening the articles for the SLR.

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Literature type	Journal, literature review, conceptual paper, and conference proceeding	Book chapter, book, lecture note, and erratum
Language	English	Non-English
Focus of study	Manuscripts on employee well-being and digital transformation in the context of human resource management, management, organisational behaviour, and other related domains.	Purely technical, engineering or system-design manuscripts without employee outcomes. Manuscripts that address general digitalisation without linking it to challenges faced by employees or employee well-being. Studies focusing solely on consumer or student well-being.
Timeline	No time restriction applied	-

2.3. PRISMA Flow and Screening Outcome

The PRISMA-guided study selection process proceeded in two streams. 858 Scopus records retained after record management for title-and-abstract screening. At this stage, 780 records were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria in terms of focus, context, or substantive relevance to the review question. This remains with 78 records for full-text retrieval and eligibility assessment. All 78 articles were successfully retrieved and reviewed in full. Following full-text assessment, 30 articles were excluded because they addressed irrelevant subject matter or different contexts from those defined in the review criteria. As a result, 48 studies from the Scopus database were retained for inclusion in the review.

In the supplementary pathway, the 24 records identified through Google Scholar were assessed separately at the full-text stage. After applying the same eligibility criteria, 15 records were excluded and 9 studies were retained. Combining 48 studies identified through the Scopus database with the 9 studies retained through the supplementary searching resulted in a final corpus of 57 studies included in the review.

Title-and-abstract screening and full-text assessment were performed independently by all four researchers based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure consistency and minimise selection bias. All records were managed manually using Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Discrepancies in study selection decisions were resolved through discussion, and where necessary, consensus was reached through iterative re-examination of the inclusion criteria and the full-text articles. The selection process followed to identify relevant manuscripts for this study is reflected in the PRISMA flowchart, depicted in Figure 1.

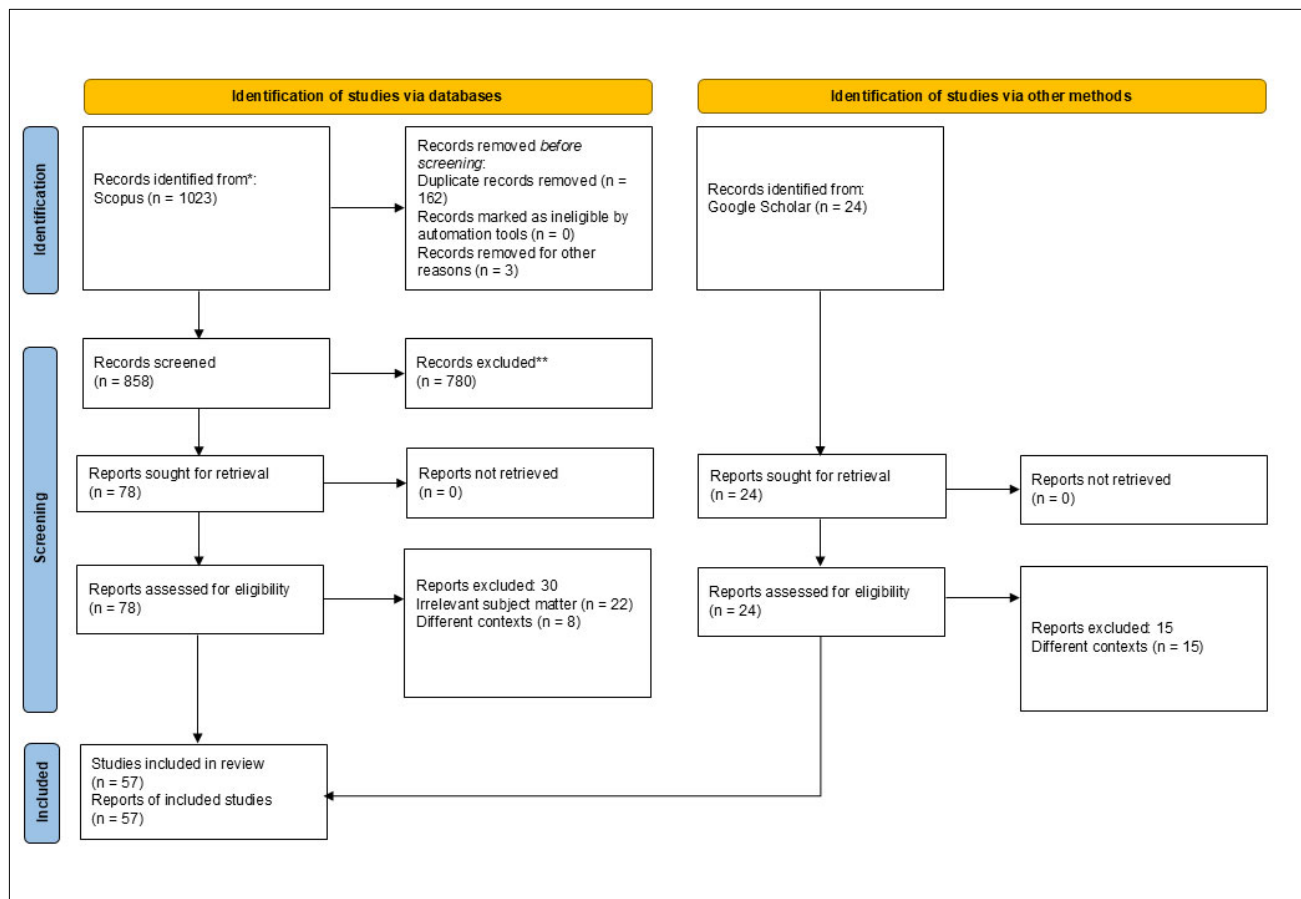


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart of the identification process of related literature [43]. Note: * Records were identified from the Scopus database (n = 1023); ** No automation tools were used during the screening process.

2.4. Quality Appraisal

In the final stage of the review, the quality of the 57 included studies was assessed using a structured set of quality assessment criteria adapted from [59]. This method was chosen as it provides a transparent and flexible way to assess the quality of heterogeneous evidence included in this review that includes empirical, conceptual, review-based and conference papers. The purpose of this appraisal was to evaluate the overall quality, relevance, and reporting adequacy of the studies included. To guide this process, five quality appraisal questions, adapted from Ain et al. [59] were used to evaluate the included studies:

Q1: Does the study address digital transformation and employee well-being, or closely related constructs, in a workplace or organisational context?

Q2: Is the research context clearly described?

Q3: Does the study clearly explain its methodology or analytical approach?

Q4: Is the evidence base, data collection procedure, or source material adequately described?

Q5: Is the data analysis, interpretive process, or reporting of findings sufficiently clear and appropriate?

To assess the quality of the selected papers systematically, the following quality levels were applied to each criterion: high, medium, and low. A study was assigned a score of 1 if it fully satisfied a criterion, 0.5 if it partially satisfied a criterion, and 0 if it did not satisfy the criterion. The scores across the five criteria were then used to provide an overall indication of each study's methodological and reporting quality. This rating structure enabled the review team to assess each study's quality in a transparent and consistent manner while

adapting to the diversity of designs represented in the sample. In this review, the highest possible score for each study was 5 (i.e., 5×1) across the five quality appraisal criteria, whereas the lowest possible score was 0 (i.e., 5×0). Based on the coding scheme, studies with scores above 3 were classified as high-quality, above 1 and below 3 as medium-quality, and below 1 as low-quality, as illustrated in Table S2.

Applying this scheme to the 57 included studies in this review shows that 51 studies were rated as high-quality, 3 studies were rated as medium-quality, and no studies fell into the low-quality category. In addition, 3 studies obtained a score of 3.0, which situated them at the borderline between high-and-medium-quality ranges under this scoring framework. These studies were retained for the review because they remained fundamentally relevant to the review question and contributed conceptually to the synthesis. Overall, the 57 studies were retained for the final review. Most empirical studies received higher scores because they generally provided clearer description of research context, methodology, data collection, and analysis procedures. Conversely, several non-empirical papers, particularly conceptual and review-based studies, received lower or borderline scores because they did not report primary data collection procedures or empirical data analysis in the same way as empirical studies, even when they were highly relevant to the topic and offered useful conceptual insights.

2.5. Synthesis Approach

Given the methodological and significant heterogeneity of the included studies, this review adopted an inductive qualitative synthesis approach guided by the Gioia methodology to integrate and interpret selected literature in a conceptually systematic manner [60]. The included final corpus comprised empirical quantitative and qualitative, conceptual, and review studies, and therefore, did not lend itself to statistical aggregation. Instead, the synthesis aimed to identify recurrent analytical patterns across studies and organise them into a transparent conceptual structure grounded in the reviewed evidence. This approach was considered appropriate because the review sought to summarise prior findings as well as to clarify how the literature collectively conceptualises the interplay between digital transformation and employee well-being across different technologies, work arrangements, and organisational settings.

Consistent with the rationale of inductive concept development, the synthesis proceeded by comparing extracted concepts and reported relationships across studies and by iteratively grouping them into progressively higher-order analytical categories. To guide this process, the review was structured around five analytical sub-questions adapted to the purpose of the study [61]:

1. What constitutes the digital environment that shapes the employee well-being outcomes?
2. What types of demands and resources arise from digitally transformed work environments?
3. What are the pathways through which digital transformation demands and resources predict employee well-being outcomes?
4. What contextual factors shape employee experiences of digital transformation?
5. What is the relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being outcomes as conceptualised in the literature?

These sub-questions provided the analytical scaffolding for the synthesis and ensured that the review captured the content of prior findings along with the relational structure through which those findings were connected.

The synthesis ultimately generated five aggregate dimensions that represent the core elements of the relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being: digital transformation conditions, digital transformation demands and resources, mediating processes, contextual factors, and employee well-being outcomes. These dimensions

emerged through constant comparison of the extracted evidence and the progressive consolidation of recurring concepts and themes.

2.6. Data Extraction and Coding

Following the final selection of studies, data were systematically extracted using a structured literature review matrix developed for the review (presented in Table S3). Each of the 57 included articles were read in full and documented in the literature review matrix, which recorded each study's characteristics, including bibliographic details, research design, theoretical lens, focal variables, sector or context, country, and key findings. In addition, information was extracted on the type of digital transformation condition, digital demands and resources, mediating mechanisms, contextual factors, and employee well-being outcomes examined and discussed. This extraction procedure ensured consistency and comparability across studies and provided the empirical basis for the subsequent coding process.

The coding process followed the core analytical steps of the Gioia methodology [60,61]. In the first stage, the authors extracted the actual terms, concepts, and relational statements used in the source articles to describe digital transformation and employee well-being. These extracted expressions functioned as the data-centric first-order layer of analysis derived from the published literature. The authors then conducted first-cycle coding by assigning these extracted terms and concepts to provisional first-order categories that remained as closely grounded as possible in the language of the reviewed studies. The five analytical sub-questions were used as informing tools during this stage, helping to determine whether a given concept contributed primarily to digital transformation conditions, digital demands and resources, mediating processes, contextual factors, or employee well-being outcomes.

In the second stage, the first-order categories were compared iteratively across studies using constant comparison. Conceptually related first-order categories were grouped into more abstract, theory-informed second-order themes that captured recurring explanatory patterns in the literature. To ensure an explicit and auditable process, the authors prepared a separate thematic mapping profile, indicating specific studies that contributed to each emerging category. In the third stage, the second-order themes were further consolidated into five aggregate dimensions and represented in the final conceptual framework proposed in this study. The final thematic mapping showed that digital transformation conditions were represented in 55 studies, digital transformation demands and resources in 54 studies, mediating processes in 33 studies, contextual factors in 22 studies, and employee well-being outcomes in 56 studies. Since many studies have addressed more than one analytical issue, individual articles contributed to multiple dimensions.

To strengthen the analytical rigour, all four researchers participated in repeated discussions, cross-checking, and refinement of coding decisions throughout the process. When ambiguities or differences in interpretation occurred, the authors returned to the original article and the extraction matrix to reassess category placement and conceptual meaning [60,62]. This recursive team-based procedure was used to enhance transparency, interpretive consistency, and the credibility of the resulting data structure and conceptual framework.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptives

The final sample comprises 57 studies, published between 2014 and 2025. Although no temporal restriction was applied during the search, the final eligible studies included in the review were concentrated in recent years. As shown in Figure 2, research on digital transformation and employee well-being increased notably over the past decade, with

a pronounced rise after 2021. The highest number of included articles was recorded in 2025 ($n = 23$), followed by 2024 ($n = 12$), and 2023 ($n = 8$), indicating growing scholarly attention to this domain. Publication trends across the 47 empirical and 10 conceptual and review studies reveal that scholarly interest is driven largely by the rise in remote work, AI-enabled systems, algorithmic management, and digital HRM practices. Journals such as *Acta Psychologica* (5 articles), *Information Technology & People* (5 articles), *Computers in Human Behavior* (3 articles), and *International Journal of Manpower* (3 articles) feature prominently in this research domain, and each of the 41 remaining articles represents different journals and conference proceedings.

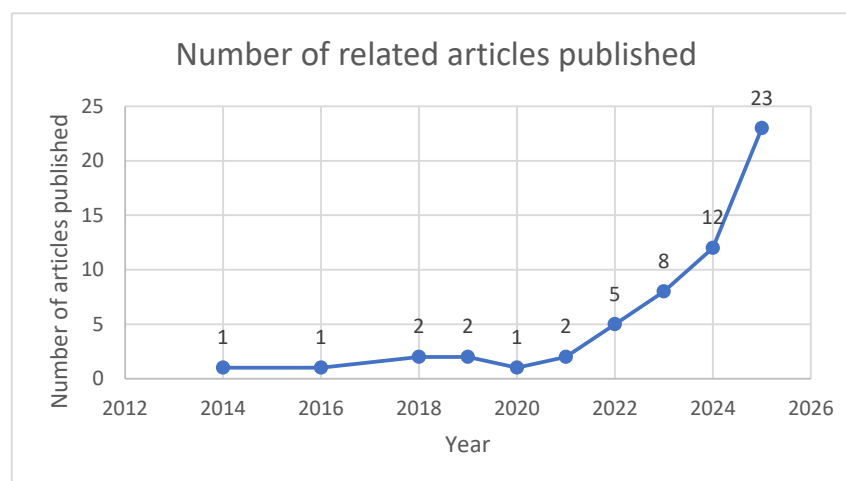


Figure 2. Number of reviewed articles published in digital transformation and employee well-being research.

Most studies were concentrated in China (10 articles), followed by India (6 articles), Pakistan (4 articles), and the United Kingdom (3 articles). This shows that the field has expanded across multiple national settings yet remains unevenly distributed. Such a pattern suggests that research on digital transformation and employee well-being is growing rapidly; however, it is still in a phase of consolidation rather than theoretical saturation. In terms of research design, most studies adopted the empirical method, with 40 quantitative and seven qualitative articles, followed by a total of 10 review and conceptual papers. Quantitative studies mainly involve cross-sectional survey designs to examine the relationships between diverse digital technologies, work characteristics, and well-being outcomes. Meanwhile, qualitative research frequently relies on interviews and case studies on employee responses to digital technology and media use. Conceptual and review articles primarily theorise the implications of digitalisation for work and well-being. These studies demonstrate the relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being as a complex, interrelated, and evolving research field.

Notably, the reviewed literature, particularly the empirical studies, are often grounded in established theoretical frameworks, namely *Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model* (16 articles), *Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory* (6 articles), *Transactional Stress Theory* (6 articles), and *Self-Determination Theory (SDT)* (5 articles).

The existing literature tends to focus more on strain-related or negative psychological outcomes of digital transformation – mainly technostress, burnout, role overload, telepressure, and psychological distress. Remarkably, an emerging category of research explores the positive pathways, including thriving at work, improved work engagement, psychological resilience, and enhanced performance that are enabled by digital job, organisational, social or personal resources. The literature also demonstrates the cross-sector relevance of this phenomenon, which spans several contexts, mainly banking [63], IT [64], manufactur-

ing [65], multinational corporations [66], financial services [67], hospitality [68] and education [69]. Overall, the descriptive analysis reveals a rapidly expanding, but scattered body of literature on the association between digital transformation and employee well-being. The preponderance of empirical studies, the multidisciplinary nature, and the variety of organisational contexts suggest that the field is still in a phase of knowledge accumulation.

3.2. Gioia-Based Synthesis of Digital Transformation and Employee Well-Being

The five aggregate dimensions reported in this section were derived through the Gioia-based synthesis of the included studies [60]. Using the literature matrix in Table S3 along with the thematic mapping in Table 3, the authors first extracted the original terms, concepts, and reported relationships from each article and organised them according to the review's five guiding sub-questions [61]. These data-centric first-order concepts were then compared across studies and grouped into theory-driven second-order themes, which were subsequently consolidated into aggregate dimensions. These represent the core elements that explain how digital transformation shapes the conditions, processes, and outcomes related to employee well-being (see Figures 3–7). Given that the individual article often contributed to more than one guiding sub-question, a single study could inform multiple aggregate dimensions.

Table 3. Thematic mapping of final article sample and their contributions to the findings of the systematic literature review, adapted from Manninen et al. [61].

No.	Author/s (Year)	Type of Study	Journal/Conference	Digital Transformation Conditions	Digital Transformation Re-Sources and Demands	Mediating Processes	Contextual Factors	Employee Well-Being Outcomes
1.	[70]	Empirical, quantitative study	Proceedings of PIC-MET'14 Conference: Portland International Center for Management of Engineering and Technology; Infrastructure and Service Integration	x	x			x
2.	[71]	Empirical, qualitative study	New Technology, Work and Employment	x	x			x
3.	[72]	Empirical, quantitative study	Computers in Human Behavior	x	x	x	x	x
4.	[73]	Empirical, quantitative study	Internet Research	x	x		x	x
5.	[74]	Empirical, quantitative study	Journal of Business Research		x			x
6.	[75]	Conceptual	2019 Zooming innovation in consumer technologies conference (ZINC), IEEE	x	x			x

Table 3. Cont.

No.	Author/s (Year)	Type of Study	Journal/Conference	Digital Transformation Conditions	Digital Transformation Re-Sources and Demands	Mediating Processes	Contextual Factors	Employee Well-Being Outcomes
7.	[76]	Empirical, quantitative study	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	x	x	x		x
8.	[1]	Systematic literature review	Technology in Society	x	x			
9.	[77]	Empirical, quantitative study	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	x		x		x
10.	[78]	Conceptual	International Journal of Manpower	x	x			x
11.	[79]	Empirical, qualitative study	Journal of Construction Engineering and Management	x	x	x	x	x
12.	[80]	Empirical, quantitative study	Proceedings of the 2022 13th International Conference on E-business, Management and Economics	x	x	x	x	x
13.	[81]	Empirical, qualitative study	International Journal of Manpower	x	x			x
14.	[82]	Empirical, quantitative study	Frontiers in Psychiatry	x	x	x		x
15.	[83]	Systematic literature review	Journal of Business Research	x	x			x
16.	[84]	Empirical, quantitative study	Computers in Human Behavior	x	x	x		x
17.	[85]	Empirical, quantitative study	Information Technology & People	x		x		x
18.	[66]	Empirical, case study	Human Resource Management Journal	x	x	x		x
19.	[86]	Review	Healthcare	x	x	x		x
20.	[87]	Empirical, quantitative study	Information Technology & People	x	x			x
21.	[88]	Empirical, quantitative study	Computers in Human Behavior	x	x	x		x
22.	[89]	Empirical, quantitative study	International Journal of Manpower	x	x	x	x	x

Table 3. Cont.

No.	Author/s (Year)	Type of Study	Journal/Conference	Digital Transformation Conditions	Digital Transformation Re-Sources and Demands	Mediating Processes	Contextual Factors	Employee Well-Being Outcomes
23.	[90]	Empirical, quantitative study	Acta Psychologica	x	x	x	x	x
24.	[91]	Empirical, quantitative study	International Conference on ICT for Smart Society (ICISS)	x	x		x	x
25.	[92]	Empirical, quantitative study	Information Technology & People	x	x		x	x
26.	[93]	Empirical, quantitative study	Scientific Reports	x	x	x	x	x
27.	[94]	Empirical, quantitative study	International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction	x	x	x		x
28.	[27]	Empirical, qualitative study	Frontiers in Organizational Psychology	x	x			x
29.	[95]	Empirical, quantitative study	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	x	x	x	x	x
30.	[96]	Empirical, quantitative study	Acta Psychologica	x	x	x	x	x
31.	[97]	Empirical, quantitative study	Kybernetes	x	x	x	x	x
32.	[69]	Empirical, quantitative study	Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology	x	x			x
33.	[98]	Empirical, quantitative study	Aslib Journal of Information Management	x	x	x	x	x
34.	[99]	Empirical, quantitative study	Current Psychology	x		x		x
35.	[31]	Empirical, quantitative study	Asia Pacific Management Review	x	x	x		x
36.	[100]	Empirical, quantitative study	Information Technology & People	x	x	x		x
37.	[65]	Empirical, quantitative study	Industrial Management & Data Systems	x	x	x	x	x
38.	[101]	Empirical, quantitative study	The International Journal of Human Resource Management	x	x		x	x

Table 3. Cont.

No.	Author/s (Year)	Type of Study	Journal/Conference	Digital Transformation Conditions	Digital Transformation Re-Sources and Demands	Mediating Processes	Contextual Factors	Employee Well-Being Outcomes
39.	[63]	Empirical, quantitative study	Acta Psychologica	x	x	x	x	x
40.	[68]	Empirical, quantitative study	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	x	x	x		x
41.	[102]	Empirical, quantitative study	Technology in Society	x	x	x		x
42.	[103]	Empirical, quantitative study	Acta Psychologica	x	x	x		x
43.	[15]	Empirical, quantitative study	Management Decision	x	x	x		x
44.	[32]	Empirical, qualitative study	International Social Science Journal	x	x			x
45.	[67]	Empirical, quantitative study	Discover Mental Health	x	x		x	x
46.	[21]	Anthology	Personnel Review	x	x			x
47.	[104]	Systematic literature review	Management Review Quarterly	x	x			x
48.	[64]	Empirical, quantitative study	Acta Psychologica		x	x	x	x
49.	[105]	Empirical, quantitative study	Behaviour & Information Technology	x	x	x		x
50.	[106]	Empirical, case study	Digital Journalism	x	x		x	x
51.	[107]	Systematic literature review	International Journal of Organizational Analysis	x	x			x
52.	[108]	Empirical, quantitative study	Kybernetes	x	x	x	x	x
53.	[22]	Conceptual	International Journal of Organizational Analysis	x	x			x
54.	[109]	Empirical, quantitative study	Frontiers in Public Health	x	x	x		x
55.	[110]	Conceptual	Discover Social Science and Health	x	x		x	x

Table 3. *Cont.*

No.	Author/s (Year)	Type of Study	Journal/Conference	Digital Transformation Conditions	Digital Transformation Re-Sources and Demands	Mediating Processes	Contextual Factors	Employee Well-Being Outcomes
56.	[111]	Empirical, multiple case study	Information Technology & People	x	x			x
57.	[112]	Empirical, quantitative study	Technological Forecasting & Social Change	x	x	x	x	x

Note. Soomro et al. (2024) [97] and Booker et al. (2025) [65] were recently published in 2026, as the earlier versions were available as early-view publications. This table adapted from Manninen et al. [61]. This adaptation is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> (accessed on 12 May 2026)). We specify that the adaptation has been made in the original thematic dimensions, replacement of the analytical categories with themes identified in the present systematic literature review (digital transformation conditions, digital transformation resources and demands, mediating processes, contextual factors, and employee well-being outcomes), updating the reviewed article sample and publication information, and redesigning the table structure and layout to align with the objectives of this study. This adaptation is used solely for this paper and for non-commercial purposes.

Across the 57 reviewed studies, digital transformation conditions were represented in 55 studies, digital transformation demands and resources in 54 studies, mediating processes in 33 studies, contextual factors in 22, and employee well-being outcomes in 56 studies. This distribution shows that digital conditions and well-being consequences have received substantial attention in the existing literature; however, mediating mechanisms and contextual contingencies have received comparatively less attention. The reviewed articles and their contributions to this study are listed in Table 3.

3.2.1. Digital Transformation Conditions—What Constitutes the Digital Environment That Shapes the Employee Well-Being Outcomes?

Digital transformation conditions refer to the proximal features of the digital work environment that alter how work is organised, coordinated, monitored, communicated, and experienced within an organisation. This aggregate dimension was represented in 55 out of the 57 included studies, comprising 45 empirical research studies, and 10 non-empirical studies (i.e., conceptual and review papers). This indicates that this aggregate dimension is one of the most extensively represented categories in the review.

Across these studies, digital transformation was most commonly operationalised through AI-based systems, digital workflow platforms, automation, algorithmic management and control, enterprise social media tools, virtual meetings, digital surveillance and cybersecurity infrastructures that progressively permeate into work processes [31,66,97,108]. Studies show that algorithmic control practices and AI-enabled HR systems can reshape work distribution, monitoring, and performance evaluation, while simultaneously reducing job autonomy, and in some settings, workplace well-being [80,85]. Likewise, research on AI-assisted and AI-enabled work environments signifies that digital transformation conditions increasingly include AI digital assistants, AI-based HR ecosystems, and responsible AI practices that reconfigure employee experience, support systems, and expectations of human-technology collaboration [31,66,108].

At the organisational level, digitalisation is also exemplified through broader infrastructural and strategic arrangements, such as IT infrastructure, IT business spanning, IT proactive stance, and hybrid HRM systems, which shape how work processes are supported and integrated across organisations [15,82]. Several studies conceptualise digital transformation conditions through new work arrangements, especially remote, hybrid, and platform-mediated work. Empirical evidence on mobile ICT overuse, virtual meetings, and

video-conferencing applications (VCAs) shows that digitally intensive work extends the temporal and spatial boundaries of work, increases synchronous communication demands, and changes employees' everyday experience of availability and interruption [27,79,87,98].

Correspondingly, qualitative evidence identifies hyperconnectivity and technology intensity in digital workplace as the defining features of contemporary digital work environments, particularly in contexts where employees must remain continuously reachable across multiple platforms and devices [27,106]. The use of social media and enterprise social media also emerges as a persistent digital condition that increasingly structures information flow, social visibility, collaboration, and communication norms at work [76,99,100,106,109].

The reviewed studies further demonstrate that besides organisational technological choices, these conditions are also shaped by broader external shocks and compliance pressures. Several studies pinpoint the COVID-19 pandemic as a major exogenous accelerator of digital transformation in organisations, particularly through rapid shifts to remote work and digitally mediated coordination, often under stringent time constraints [21,84,87,98]. Other studies highlight cybersecurity requirements, digital monitoring, and perceived surveillance as growing important features of digitally transformed work environments, especially in sectors exposed to strict compliance and data-protection demands [63,67].

Hence, the evidence suggests that digital transformation conditions at workplaces are not limited to the presence of new technologies; rather, they comprise a broader configuration of infrastructures, managerial systems, work arrangements, and exogenous pressures that collectively redefine the digital environments of work. The evidence is broadly consistent in showing that these conditions can create both empowering and constraining work environments—they may improve flexibility, coordination, and access to information; and concomitantly intensify monitoring, constant availability, and boundary erosion, depending on how they are implemented and experienced [70,81,84,85,87]. Accordingly, digital transformation conditions constitute the foundational layer of the reviewed framework because these components establish the work environment from which digital demands, resources, mediating processes, and employee well-being outcomes subsequently emerge. Figure 3 presents the digital transformation conditions that shape the employee well-being outcomes.

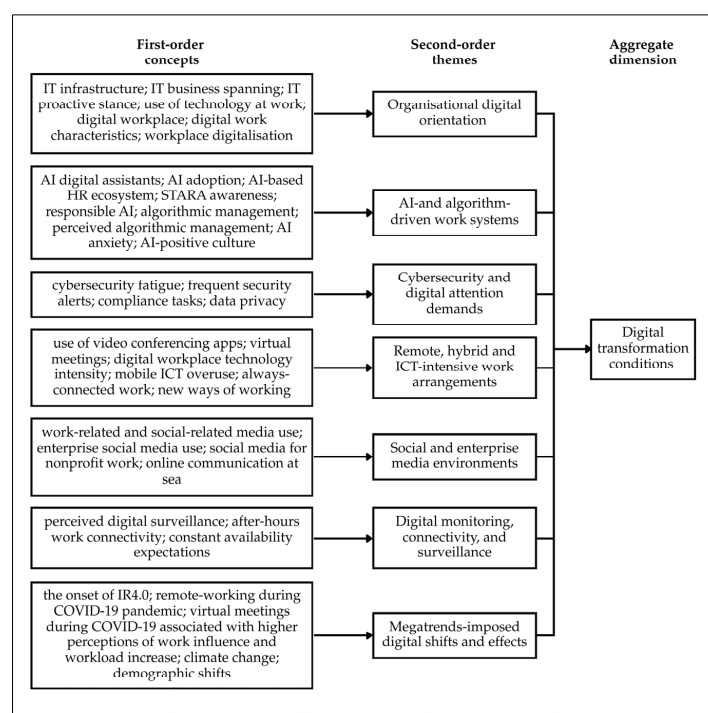


Figure 3. Digital transformation conditions that shape the employee well-being outcomes.

3.2.2. Digital Transformation Demands and Resources—What Types of Demands and Resources Arise from Digitally Transformed Work Environments?

Digital transformation demands and resources refer to the strain-inducing and enabling work characteristics that emerge within digitally transformed work environments. This dimension was represented in 54 out of the 57 included studies, comprising 41 empirical and 13 non-empirical studies. The evidence shows that digitally transformed work is consistently characterised by a dual structure, which means, digital technologies can generate new demands that deplete employees' cognitive, emotional, and temporal resources, and equally function as resources when they are accompanied by supportive infrastructures, practices, and capabilities [102,103].

The evidence is particularly compelling and consistent on the demand aspects. Across studies, the most recurrent demands are technostress creators such as techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, and techno-insecurity, along with information overload, communication overload, system feature overload, surveillance pressure, role overload, and expectations of constant availability [27,65,74,86,98]. These demands are reported to increase cognitive strain, emotional exhaustion, and blurring of work–life boundary because employees must process large volumes of information, manage frequent digital interruptions, learn new systems quickly, and remain available beyond conventional working hours [70,76,79,87,106]. Qualitative and conceptual studies reinforce this pattern by showing that digitally intensive work often produces feelings of invasion, fatigue, insecurity, and pressure to remain connected, particularly in remote, platform-based, or AI-mediated work contexts [32,71,75,81]. Hence, the reviewed studies are more consistent in identifying digital demands than in pinpointing the conditions under which such demands become manageable or beneficial.

Concurrently, the literature also identifies a substantial set of digital and organisational resources that can buffer or offset these pressures. Empirical studies show that digital culture, digital leadership, digital capabilities, digital HRM, IT infrastructure, and proactive digital systems can reduce technostress, streamline workflows, and improve employee mental well-being, when implemented in a supportive manner [82,102]. Similarly, facilitating conditions, performance expectancy, user-friendly technologies, and positive attitudes towards digital tools are associated with stronger technological acceptance, lower frustration, and better well-being outcomes [88,105]. Beyond technology design per se, organisational resources such as training, managerial support, communication, participation in digital initiatives, continuous learning, ethical compliance, and well-being-oriented HRM (WBHRM) practices are frequently identified as important sources of support that help employees adapt to digital transformation and mitigate resistance, overload, or anxiety [15,78,95,101,104,107,111]. These studies imply that the positive potential of digital transformation in an organisation does not depend solely on the type of technology it adopts; instead, it also requires social, managerial, and developmental resources that facilitate employee adjustment.

However, the evidence on personal resources and barriers is comparatively less developed. A smaller stream of studies points to technology self-efficacy, core self-evaluations, psychological resilience, and readiness to learn as resources that weaken the negative effects of digital overload or technostress, whereas low self-efficacy, resistance to change, and fear of technological displacement can intensify strain and reduce well-being [88,93,110,111]. This relative underrepresentation suggests that the current literature has focused more substantially on organisational and technological demands than on the employee capabilities that help shape how these demands are interpreted and managed.

Taken together, the reviewed studies indicate that digital transformation should be ascribed as a work configuration, in which demands and resources coexist, and not as

a uniform stressor or resource. The evidence is largely consistent in demonstrating that high digital demand without adequate support are associated with strain, overload, and impaired well-being, whereas supportive leadership, training, participation, and usable technologies can turn digitally transformed work into a more enabling environment [63, 95,105,107]. At the same time, some studies suggest that under supportive conditions, digital pressures may be interpreted as challenge demands rather than purely hindrance demands, indicating that the effects of digital transformation depend on how demands and resources are configured and balanced within particular work settings [63,86,91]. As such, this aggregate dimension forms the second layer of the framework by showing how digital transformation conditions translate into specific pressures and support through which employee well-being is shaped. Figure 4 presents the demands and resources that arise from digitally transformed work environments.

3.2.3. Mediating Processes—What Are the Pathways Through Which Digital Transformation Demands and Resources Predict Employee Well-Being Outcomes?

Mediating processes refer to the intervening psychological, affective, behavioural, and relational mechanisms through which digital transformation demands and resources are translated into employee well-being outcomes. This aggregate dimension was represented in 33 out of the 57 included studies, with evidence drawn predominantly from empirical quantitative research. This clearly indicates that mediation has been examined mainly through explanatory models rather than through conceptual or qualitative approaches. Across this scholarly work, the findings converge in showing that the effects of digital transformation on employee well-being are rarely direct. Instead, they are channelled through intermediate states that either impair or support employee functioning.

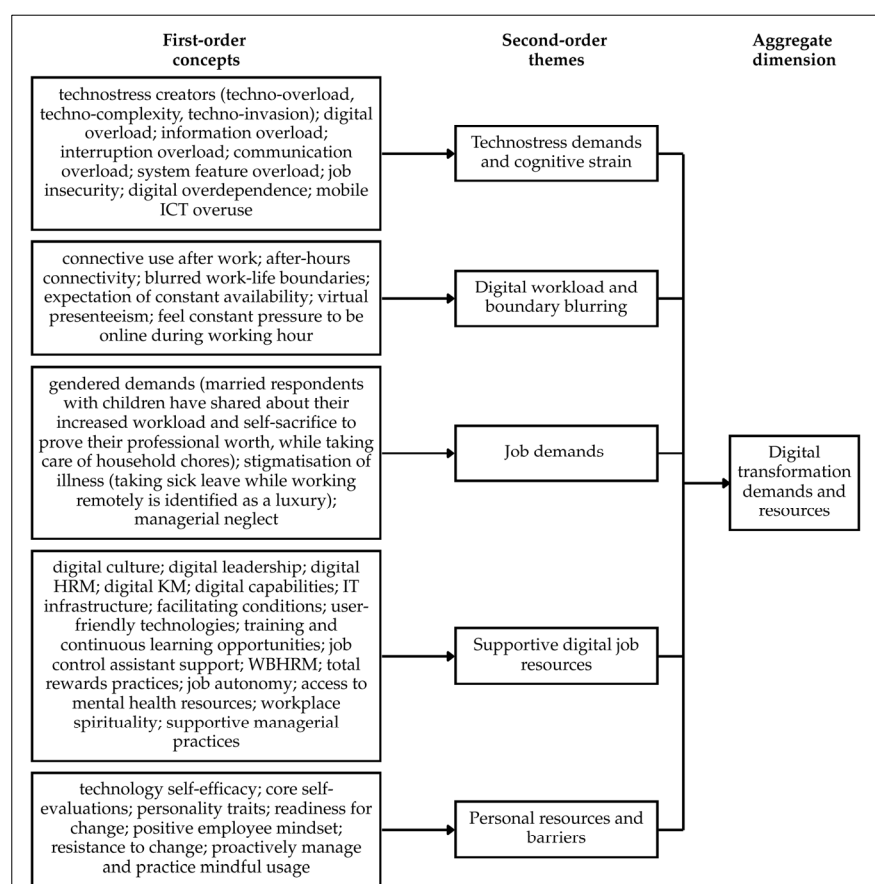


Figure 4. Demands and resources that arise from digitally transformed work environments.

The strongest and most consistent evidence involves strain-based mediators. Across multiple studies, technostress, burnout, work exhaustion, need for recovery, job stress, role overload, technology–work conflict, psychological contract violation, and negative affect are repeatedly identified as mechanisms through which digital demands reduce employee well-being [69,77,79,84,89,93,94,102,103]. For example, Li et al. [102] show that technostress and burnout serially mediate the relationship between digital resources and mental well-being, while Wang et al. [89] demonstrate that work exhaustion mediates the negative association between technostress and employee work well-being. Similarly, Jiang et al. [79] find that role overload and technology–work conflict mediate the effects of mobile ICT overuse on job burnout, and Jin et al. [93] show that job stress mediates the negative effect of Smart Technology, AI, Robotics, and Algorithms (STARA) awareness on work affective well-being. Jointly, these studies provide relatively strong support for a health-impairment pathway, in which digitally intensified demands initially generate strain-related states that subsequently undermine employee well-being.

A smaller but important stream of studies identifies resource-based mediating processes. Work engagement, thriving at work, human–AI teaming, task–technology fit, perceived e-leadership support, organisational pride, and positive affect are reported as mechanisms through which digital resources can improve employee well-being or translate well-being into other favourable outcomes, such as advocacy behaviour [31,68,82,99,109]. For instance, Aulia and Lin [31] exhibit that AI digital assistant skills enhance employee well-being indirectly through human–AI teaming, task–technology fit, and perceived e-leadership support, whereas Zhu et al. [99] find that thriving at work fully mediates the relationship between employees' social media use and both work and life well-being. Sun et al. [82] further demonstrate that well-being at work mediates the relationship between digitalisation-related organisational capabilities and mental health. These studies suggest that positive pathways do exist; however, they are underexplored and less consistently represented than strain-based mechanisms.

The reviewed studies also point to coping and relational mediators that shape employees' adaption to digital pressures. Yang et al. [112] report that defensive routines fully mediate the relationship between technostress and technology-enabled performance, indicating how employees may respond to digital strain through avoidant or self-protective behaviours. Qualitative evidence from Šimunjak [106] similarly identifies digital disconnection practices, such as muting notifications, turning off devices, or deleting work-related apps, as coping responses to information overload, harassment, and constant availability. Furthermore, Radic et al. [76] reveal that social pressure and fear of missing out (FoMO) function as relational mechanisms linking digital communication use to well-being-related outcomes. These studies extend the mediating layer beyond individual psychological states, by showing that digital transformation also affects well-being through behavioural adaptation and socially embedded pressures.

In general, the evidence indicates that mediating processes constitute dynamic pathways through which digital transformation conditions are translated into employee well-being outcomes. The pattern across the studies is not entirely unidirectional. Strain-based or negative mediators dominate the current literature; however, positive mediators show that digital resources can also foster beneficial outcomes under supportive conditions. This distinction is important for the proposed framework because it shows that digital transformation does not affect employee well-being in a linear, cause-and-effect manner. Rather, its consequences depend on the mechanisms activated between digital demands and resources on the one hand, and well-being outcomes on the other. In this sense, the mediating-process dimension links the preceding category of digital demands and resources to the subsequent category of employee well-being outcomes by specifying the pathways through which

those effects unfold. Figure 5 depicts the pathways through which digital transformation demands and resources predict employee well-being outcomes.

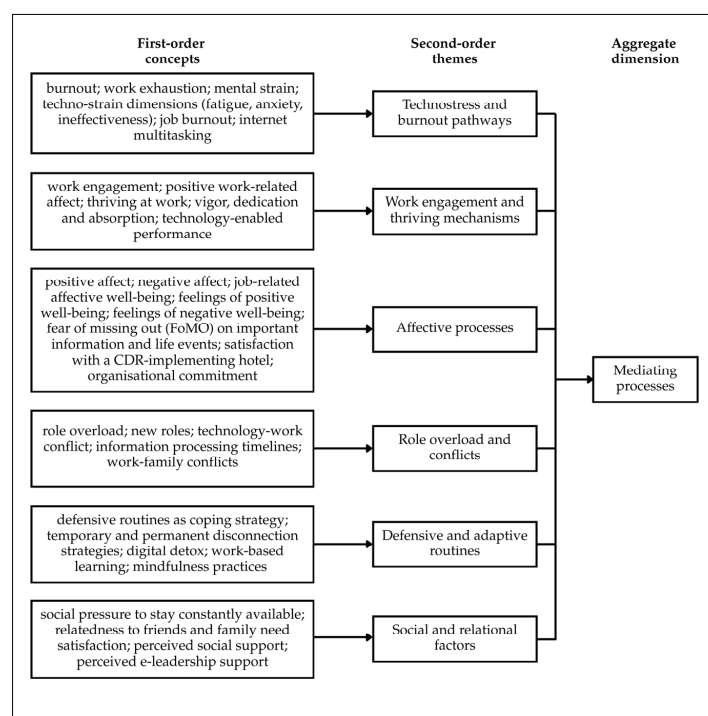


Figure 5. Pathways through which digital transformation demands and resources predict employee well-being outcomes.

3.2.4. Contextual Factors—What Contextual Elements Shape Employee Experiences of Digital Transformation?

Contextual factors refer to the organisational, team-level, and individual conditions that strengthen, weaken, or otherwise shape the relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being. This aggregate dimension was represented in 22 out of the 57 included studies, comprising 21 empirical and 1 non-empirical papers, making it the least developed of the five dimensions identified in this review. A relatively smaller number of studies suggests that although the existing literature increasingly acknowledges the significance of boundary conditions, these have been examined less systematically than digital conditions, demands and resources, or well-being outcomes.

Within this dimension, the most consistently reported contextual influences are organisational support, leadership, communication, and workplace climate. Several studies show that supportive organisational environments can alter how employees interpret and respond to digital pressures. For example, perceived organisational support strengthens the positive relationship between technostress and job performance in the banking sector, suggesting that digital pressures may be experienced as challenge stressors when adequate support is available [63]. Conversely, organisational support in AI adoption contexts is reported to buffer the negative effects of AI anxiety on employee well-being, thereby reducing stress, job insecurity, and dissatisfaction during organisational change [97]. Leadership also emerges as a recurring contextual factor. Digital leadership, transformational leadership, and leaders' responsible AI symbolism are shown to shape employees' experiences of technostress, AI-enabled work, resilience, and mental health, signifying that leadership capability is critical in digitally changing work environments [90,95,108,112]. These findings are broadly consistent in manifesting that supportive leadership and organisational support can improve employee adaptation to digital transformation, although the direction of the

outcome may vary depending on whether the focal outcome is well-being, performance, or resilience.

Some studies highlight the contextual role of communication practices and organisational climate. Raj and Goute [64] show that digital internal communication moderates the relationships among internal branding, employee well-being, and technostress in IT firms, indicating that the communication systems can either support or complicate employee experiences of digital work. Notably, this study suggests that greater use of digital internal communication does not uniformly improve well-being, introducing a more nuanced picture. According to the authors, communicative digital tools may be beneficial when they function as supportive instruments; on the contrary, these tools might become burdensome when they are excessive. Likewise, studies on digital culture, responsible AI, and human-centred digitalisation imply that the organisational meaning attached to digital systems influences whether employees experience such systems as enabling or threatening [103,108]. Thus, the contextual role of communication and culture is not merely circumstantial; in fact, it actively shapes whether digitally transformed work is interpreted as supportive, intensive, or intrusive.

The reviewed studies further demonstrate that team-level and individual-level resources condition employee responses to digital transformation. Team member support mitigates the effects of mobile ICT connectivity on technology–work conflict and role overload among construction project managers [79], while workplace knowledge diversity weakens the indirect negative effect of technostress on work well-being through work exhaustion [89]. At the individual level, psychological resilience weakens the negative effect of STARA awareness on work affective well-being via job stress [93], and technology self-efficacy reduces the effect of technology overload on work stress [88,98]. Lang et al. [80] further show that an incremental or growth mindset can mitigate the negative consequences of perceived algorithmic control, whereas an entity or fixed mindset intensifies them. These studies indicate that employees' reactions towards digital transformation are shaped by social and psychological resources available to them.

Organisational characteristics also emerged as important contextual factors. Evidence on algorithmic management indicates that its effects on workplace well-being and job autonomy may vary by organisational size, with stronger effects reported in smaller organisations compared to larger ones [85]. This implies that organisational scale can influence how employees experience digitally mediated control, monitoring, and decision-making systems. Similarly, organisational types or sectoral context shape exposure to digital demands. For example, employees in high cybersecurity exposure sectors, such as IT and finance, reported higher levels of cybersecurity fatigue, potentially due to stricter regulatory requirements, frequent security alerts, and repeated compliance-related digital tasks [67].

Overall, the evidence suggests that contextual factors function as boundary conditions that influence whether digital transformation within an organisation is experienced primarily as an enabling or resource-depleting process by the employees. The literature is reasonably consistent in demonstrating that organisational support, leadership, team support, and personal resources improve employees' capacity to cope with digital demands. Some contextual factors, such as organisational support, or digital communication may enhance well-being in one setting, while increasing pressure or performance expectations in another, depending on the broader constitution of demands and outcomes under study. This precedent is important for the proposed framework because the effects of digital transformation depend on the organisational and social setting, in which employees experience it. In other words, contextual factors influence whether digital demands and resources lead

to positive or negative employee well-being outcomes. Figure 6 presents the contextual factors that shape employee experiences of digital transformation.

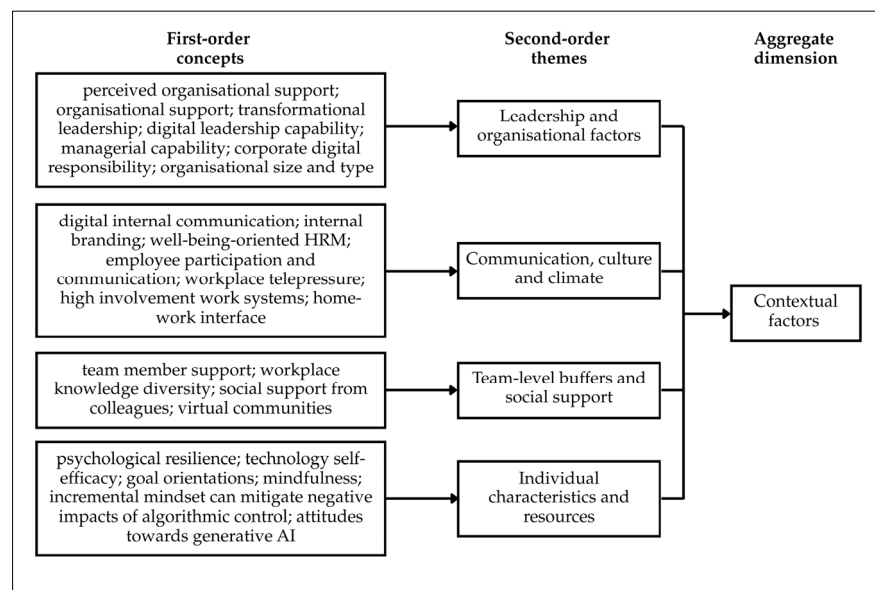


Figure 6. Contextual factors that shape employee experiences of digital transformation.

3.2.5. Employee Well-Being Outcomes—What Is the Relationship Between Digital Transformation and Employee Well-Being Outcomes as Conceptualised in the Literature?

Employee well-being outcomes encapsulate the psychological, emotional, behavioural, relational, and in some studies, physical consequences associated with digital transformation at work. This aggregate dimension was represented in 56 out of the 57 included studies, comprising 47 empirical and 9 non-empirical studies. Hence, the employee well-being outcomes dimension emerges as the most extensively represented category in the review. The evidence shows that employee well-being has been conceptualised in diverse ways, including psychological well-being, work well-being, life satisfaction, mental health, job satisfaction, engagement, resilience, stress, emotional exhaustion, burnout, and work–life conflict. This conceptual breadth indicates strong scholarly interest in employee outcomes; however, it also reveals that the literature remains heterogenous in how well-being is defined and measured.

The literature is more consistent in reporting negative well-being outcomes than positive ones. Across the studies, digital pressures such as after-hours connectivity, technostress, techno-strain, overload, AI anxiety, and job stress are associated with psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, burnout, fatigue, and reduced work affective well-being [27,65,69,79,81,92,93,102]. For example, Li et al. [103] show that after-hours work connectivity and perceived organisational support are linked to psychological contract violation and psychological distress, while Jin et al. [93] find that STARA awareness reduces work affective well-being through job stress. Similarly, Mizrak et al. [67] report that cybersecurity fatigue reduces productivity and mental health, and Mat-Artun and Küskü [32] show that digitally intensified remote work demands can undermine employee self-care by compelling employees to work even when they are ill. Taken together, these studies indicate that the most established outcome pattern in the literature is a health-impairment trajectory, wherein poorly managed digital transformation is linked with strain-related and dysfunctional employee outcomes.

Simultaneously, a few studies point to the positive well-being outcomes under more supportive digital conditions. These studies report that user-friendly technologies, technology acceptance, digital resources, responsible AI practices, and digitally enabled support

systems are associated with improved mental health, psychological well-being, engagement, thriving, and advocacy-related outcomes [31,68,82,99,100,105,108]. For example, Sansovini and Magida [105] reveal that acceptance of digital technologies is positively associated with employee mental health and well-being, while Bodhi [100] shows that enterprise social media use can enhance psychological well-being and innovative work performance. Zhu et al. [99] further demonstrate that thriving at work improves both work and life well-being, and Aulia and Lin [31] report that AI-enabled support in remote work settings can enhance employee well-being and work engagement. Qualitative and case-based evidence also suggests that AI-enabled HR ecosystems, appropriate support practices, and digitally supportive environments may improve employee experience, job satisfaction, and work–life balance [66]. These studies suggest that digital transformation can support employee well-being when technologies are embedded in enabling organisational systems rather than imposed solely as performance-enhancing tools.

The reviewed literature, therefore, shows that the relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being is contingent rather than uniform. This means that a digital environment may be associated with improved engagement and well-being when employees have access to digital resources, supportive leadership, and developmental support; inversely, the same environment may be linked with distress, burnout, and work–life interference when digital demands are high and support is insufficient [27,31,68,75,82,92,101]. In the proposed conceptual framework, this derive shows that employee well-being outcomes are the end results of how digital transformation conditions, digital demands and resources, mediating processes, and contextual factors combine in specific work settings. Accordingly, the current literature does not support a uniformly optimistic or pessimistic view of digital transformation; relatively, it indicates that employee well-being outcomes depend on how digital work is designed, supported, and experienced. Figure 7 illustrates the relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being outcomes as conceptualised in the existing literature.

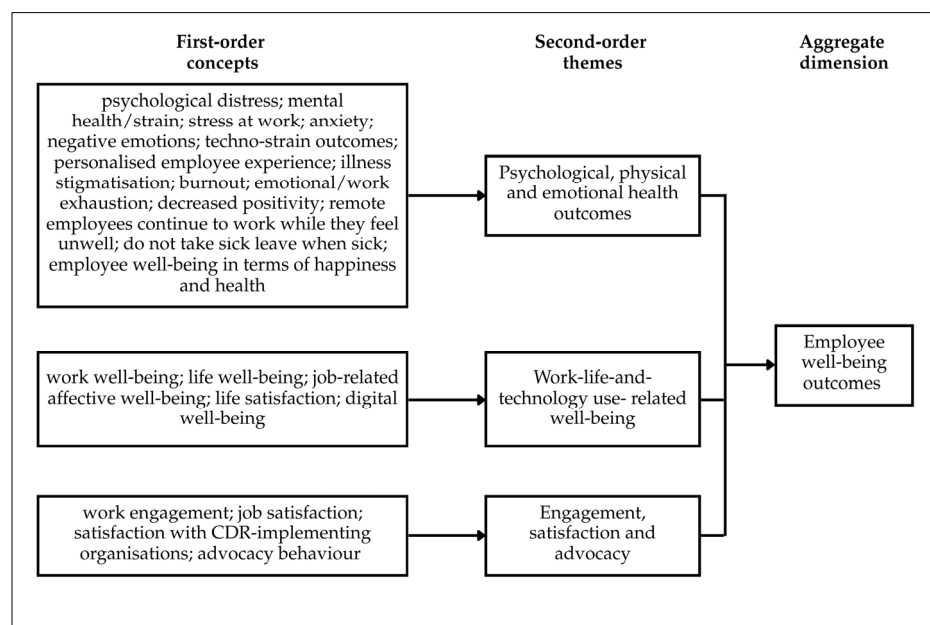


Figure 7. Relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being outcomes as conceptualised in existing literature.

4. Discussion

This review synthesised the literature on digital transformation and employee well-being published between 2014 and 2025 and integrated the findings into five interrelated aggregate dimensions: digital transformation conditions, digital transformation demands and resources, mediating processes, contextual factors, and employee well-being outcomes [60,61].

Drawing on 57 studies across multiple sectors, national settings, and methodological traditions, the findings reveal both the convergences and divergences in how researchers conceptualise, examine, and interpret the relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being. The evidence of the reviewed studies coincides with the view that digital transformation does not involve only technological shifts, but a broader reconfiguration of work systems, managerial practices, communication structures, and employee experiences. This interpretation is consistent with the wider digital transformation scholarship, which conceptualises digital transformation as an organisational process that reshapes value creation, structures, and work arrangements, rather than as mere technology adoption [24].

At the same time, the evidence appears uneven across five dimensions. Current literature is strongest in describing digital transformation conditions, digital demands and resources, and employee well-being outcomes. However, it is less developed in explaining the mediating processes and contextual factors through which these effects unfold. This asymmetry signifies that the field has progressed more in identifying the changes that emerge from digital transformation and the outcomes that follow, than in explaining how and under what circumstances these effects occur.

The first major pattern uncovered in this review is the dual and contingent attribute of digital transformation. Across studies, digital technologies and digitally mediated work arrangements are repeatedly shown to generate both enabling and constraining conditions. While AI-enabled systems, algorithmic management, remote and hybrid work models, digital HRM, enterprise social media, and cybersecurity systems can improve flexibility, speed, information access, collaboration, and decision support, they also exacerbate monitoring, overload, attention fragmentation, connectivity pressure, and work–life boundary erosion. This finding strongly aligns with prior research that asserted digital technologies are neither inherently beneficial nor harmful; their implications, to some extent, depend on how they are designed, governed, and embedded in work practices [7,25,26,95,113].

This view also resonates with the autonomy paradox research, which demonstrated that mobile technologies may increase perceived flexibility while simultaneously extending expectations of availability and self-disciplining behaviour [114]. Similarly algorithmic management work has shown that algorithmic systems can improve coordination and efficiency while introducing new forms of managerial control, surveillance, and worker dependence [115]. The present review extends these insights by characterising the duality of digital shift within the broader digital transformation–employee well-being nexus across the literature, instead of confining it to a few technologies or sectors.

The second pattern relates to the relative imbalance between negative and positive well-being pathways. The strongest and most consistent evidence in the reviewed studies focuses on the harmful outcomes and strain-related processes. Technostress, overload, burnout, emotional exhaustion, job stress, psychological distress, after-hours connectivity pressure, and work–life conflict are more frequently examined, operationalised, and exhibited than positive outcomes such as thriving, engagement, resilience, or positive mental well-being. This pattern emulates the wider technostress literature, which has constantly documented the detrimental effects of techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, techno-insecurity, and techno-uncertainty on employee attitudes, health, and productivity [29,116].

Nonetheless, a smaller stream of reviewed studies shows that when digital transformation is supported by digital leadership, well-designed systems, training, facilitating conditions, digital culture, and employee-centred HR practices, it may enhance work engagement, work and life well-being, mental health, and positive adaptation. These findings help explain that the current discourse often appears overly pessimistic as the field has produced more knowledge about digital risks than digitally enabled well-being. Consequently, this review draws attention to inferring digital transformation as a condition that contains both pathogenic and salutogenic prospects [7], although these two sides are not yet equally explored.

The third pattern reveals that the relationship between digital transformation and employee well-being is rarely direct. The comparative pattern across Figures 3–7 (as discussed in the Section 3) suggests a layered process, in which broader digital transformation conditions generate particular digital demands and resources, which are then translated into employee experiences through mediating mechanisms. The resulting effects are then shaped further by contextual influences before reconciling as well-being outcomes. Recent research by Scholze and Hecker [117] reinforces this view by accentuating that the impact of digital transformation relies significantly on the configuration of demands and resources, whose effects depend on how digital work is designed and managed.

The fourth pattern refers to the importance of contextual factors. Although contextual influences were epitomised in fewer studies than the other aggregate dimensions, some of the findings indicate that elements such as organisational support, digital leadership, transformational leadership, communication quality, team support, knowledge diversity, resilience, self-efficacy, and mindset appear as conditions that can strengthen, weaken, or redirect the effects of digital transformation on employee well-being. This finding is consistent with earlier occupational health and research showing that organisational ICT support can reduce the negative impact of ICT demands on employee outcomes [118]. It also corresponds with contemporary work design scholarship, which argues that digitalisation increases the importance of work design because employee outcomes depend heavily on how jobs, responsibilities, support, and interdependencies are configured in digital environments [4,6,119].

The review further indicates that contextual factors help explain why presumably similar digital conditions may produce contradictory findings across settings. For example, digital communication tools may be experienced as supportive in one context, but burdensome in another; after-hours connectivity may be interpreted as flexibility under one set of organisational norms but as intrusion and contract violation under another. These show that the effects of digital transformation depend on organisational and social setting in which employees experience it. Contextual factors influence whether digital demands and resources lead to positive or negative employee well-being outcomes.

Additionally, the synthesis of contradictory findings reflect that technostress itself is not always associated with harm. Under some supportive conditions, digital pressures may function as challenge stressors that stimulate adaptation or improved performance. This is consistent with prior calls to distinguish techno-distress from techno-eustress and to move beyond partial conceptualisation of digital strain or technostress [7]. The framework derived from the review captures this complexity by integrating conditions, demands, and resources, mediating processes, contextual factors, and outcomes into a single explanatory structure.

A comparative interpretation of Figures 3–7 (as discussed in the Section 3) reinforces this view. Figures 3 and 4 contain the broadest and most densely supported dimensions, indicating that extant literature is well developed in identifying the digital conditions of work and the demands and resources they generate. Figure 7 is similarly extensive,

showing that employee well-being outcomes are the most widely represented endpoint in the field, but also the most conceptually heterogeneous. By contrast, Figures 5 and 6 are comparatively narrower, demonstrating that the current literature has devoted less attention to the mediating mechanisms and contextual contingencies. This comparative pattern is theoretically significant. It suggests that future research should move beyond documenting digital pressures and outcomes and invest more heavily in explaining how digital transformation influences employee experience and when its effects are amplified, mitigated, or redirected.

4.1. Proposed Conceptual Framework

In this regard, the proposed conceptual framework derives directly from the relative density, sequencing, and interdependence of the patterns observed across Figures 3–7. This strongly supports the relevance of the JD-R model as the primary lens for the field. The reviewed studies constantly show that digitally transformed work produces demands that impair well-being and resources that support motivation and functioning [39]. Figure 8 presents the proposed conceptual framework of digital transformation and employee well-being elements, depicting how digital transformation conditions shape digital demands and resources, how these relationships unfold through mediating processes, and how contextual factors influence employee well-being outcomes.

Nevertheless, the review also suggests that the JD-R model can be extended in important ways for digital transformation research. First, it identifies digital transformation conditions as a more upstream layer than is usually portrayed in conventional JD-R applications. These conditions include technologies along with digitally mediated work arrangements, infrastructural capacities, and external shocks such as pandemic or heightened compliance demands. Second, the review shows that mediating mechanisms, such as technostress, burnout, work exhaustion, thriving, task-technology fit, and adaptive coping routines deserve more attention because digital transformation effects are generally channelled through these processes rather than following a direct cause-and-effect path. In this respect, the proposed conceptual framework can be interpreted as an evidence-grounded extension of JD-R model, tailored to the specific features of digitally transformed work. Applying such approaches could also help reveal how to support distinct well-being outcomes across different temporal and contextual scales.

The proposed framework is also consistent with the socio-technical perspective, which complements the JD-R model by accenting that employee well-being in digitally transformed workplaces is formed by digital job demands and resources [116] along with the interaction between technological systems, work design, organisational practices, and human factors [6]. From this standpoint, digital transformation can be understood as effects that emerge from how digital tools are embedded in work processes, how employees are expected to use them, and how organisations govern, support, and redesign work around them. Thus, the JD-R model explains the health-impairment and motivational pathways through which digital demands and resources affect employees, and the socio-technical lens describes why these pathways are contingent upon the broader configuration of technology, work organisation, leadership, support systems, and employee capabilities.

In general, the proposed conceptual framework offers a more systematic description of why digital transformation may either support or weaken employee well-being. Digital transformation conditions form the broader environment of work and workplaces; digital demands and resources reflect the proximal pressures and support embedded in that environment; mediating processes describe how those pressures and support are translated into employee experiences; contextual factors shape how employees interpret, cope with, and respond to those experiences; and finally, employee well-being outcomes embody the

resulting psychological, affective, behavioural, and relational consequences. Given that the framework emerged inductively from the review's evidence, it should be construed as a conceptual synthesis grounded in the current state of the literature. Its primary value lies in clarifying the main dimensions through which future research and practice can approach digital transformation and employee well-being more systematically across sectors, occupations, and technological settings.

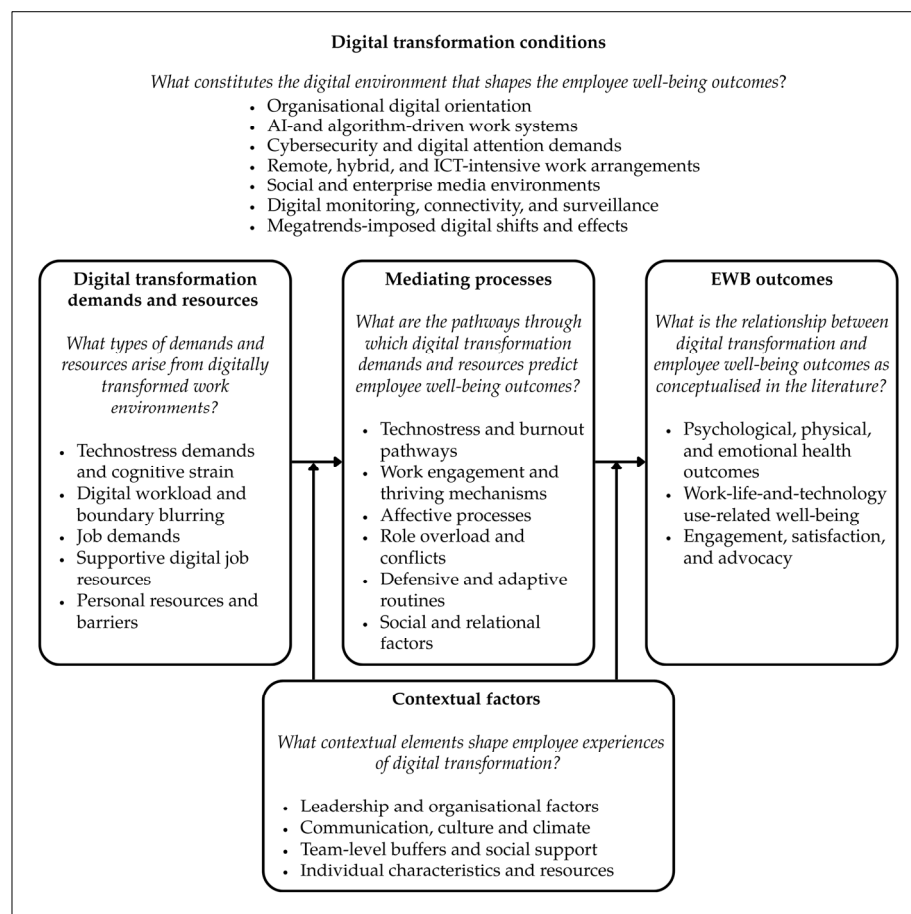


Figure 8. Conceptual framework of digital transformation and employee well-being elements, depicting how digital transformation conditions shape digital demands and resources, how these relationships unfold through mediating processes, and how contextual factors influence employee well-being outcomes.

4.2. Future Research Directions

The review identified several recurring limitations in the current evidence base. First, the existing literature remains methodologically uneven. More empirical studies rely on cross-sectional survey designs, which are useful for identifying relationships but insufficient for explaining how well-being changes over time as digital transformation intensifies, stabilises, or becomes normalised. Longitudinal, diary-based, and multi-wave designs remain comparatively rare, even though many reviewed articles imply that digital demands and resources are dynamic, cumulative, and potentially fluctuating across different stages of technological implementation. Thus, future research should adopt more temporally sensitive and methodologically integrated designs to examine whether digital strains accumulate, if digital resources become more effective over time, and how employees adapt to changing digital work conditions.

Second, the current literature surrounding employee well-being is still conceptually heterogeneous. Employee well-being is multifariously operationalised as mental health,

job satisfaction, work well-being, burnout, engagement, or distress, influenced by various technological, organisational, and psychosocial dynamics. While this heterogeneity reflects the multidimensional nature of the construct [120], it complicates synthesis and comparison across studies. Future studies should, thus, define employee well-being more specifically and distinguish between negative indicators, such as strain, burnout, and distress, and positive indicators, namely engagement, thriving, resilience, and satisfaction. This would support more precise operationalisation of digital well-being constructs and strengthen cumulative theory development.

Third, the field remains uneven in scope. While digital transformation conditions, digital demands, and well-being outcomes are widely examined, mediating processes and contextual factors are less systematically theorised and tested. Future research should give ample attention to the mechanisms through which digital transformation affects employee well-being, including technostress appraisal, perceived control, digital self-efficacy, coping, resource depletion, and resource gain. Likewise, contextual factors such as leadership, organisational culture, team climate, and job design should be examined as active boundary conditions that shape enabling or harmful—or both—consequences of digital transformation.

Fourth, future studies should also differentiate more carefully among specific digital transformation archetypes and employee digital media use [121]. AI-assisted decision-making, algorithmic management, platform work, cybersecurity-intensive work, enterprise social media, and hybrid work systems may produce different combinations of demands, resources, and well-being outcomes. Treating them as equivalent forms of “digitalisation” risks concealing meaningful differences in how employees experience technology-mediated work. Comparative cross-sector and cross-country designs would, therefore, strengthen the understanding of how digital transformation affects employees in different institutional, cultural, and occupational contexts.

Fifth, there is a need for more research on positive, resource-based, and salutogenic pathways. Compared with the ample attention given to technostress, overload, burnout, and distress, relatively few studies examine how digital culture, digital leadership, responsible AI, mindfulness, thriving, psychological safety, and resilience help sustain employee well-being in digital environments. This is a significant gap because the limited evidence that is currently available suggests that digital transformation is not inevitably harmful and may support well-being when employees have sufficient organisational, social, and personal resources [96,122]. Future research should move beyond focusing primarily on the harmful effects of digital transformation and examine more systematically how digitally transformed work can be designed to promote healthier, more adaptive, and sustainable employee outcomes.

Researchers should also examine the tensions that arise from digital transformation as concurrent and interdependent forces that influence employee well-being, instead of simple trade-offs [123]. Employees may simultaneously experience autonomy and surveillance, flexibility and constant availability, efficiency and overload, or collaboration and interruption. These tensions are pivotal to employee digital experience, and requires paradoxical principles perspectives alongside Job Demands-Resources and Conservation of Resources theories to examine how employees and organisations manage competing digital demands and resources over time [124]. Such approaches may help clarify variations in the impact of digital technologies across different organisational contexts.

In sum, the findings indicate that digital transformation shapes employee well-being through a complex set of interdependent conditions, demands, resources, mediating mechanisms, and contextual influences. The quality of digitally transformed work depends on

whether organisations design and govern digital systems in ways that support employee functioning, autonomy, coping, and sustainable well-being over time.

5. Implications for Theory and Practice

This review has several implications for both theory and practice. Theoretically, the review advances the understanding of digital transformation and employee well-being by consolidating fragmented evidence into an integrative framework that explains how digital transformation shapes employee outcomes through interrelated technological, psychosocial, organisational, and contextual processes. The synthesis specifically identifies five interrelated building blocks: digital conditions (e.g., algorithmic management, platformisation), digital demands (e.g., technostress, cognitive overload), digital resources (e.g., autonomy, leadership support), mediating processes (e.g., coping, resource depletion or gain), and contextual factors (e.g., organisational culture, job design) that collectively shape employee well-being outcomes. By explicitly mapping the relationships among these dimensions, the review moves beyond prior studies that examine isolated variables and conceptualises employee digital well-being as a dynamic process embedded in socio-technical systems [70].

Importantly, the findings extend the JD-R model by underscoring that digital transformation reconfigures the balance between demands and resources [39,117]. Digital technologies may operate as demands when they exacerbate workload, increase surveillance, create constant connectivity, or generate cognitive overload. At the same time, they can function as resources when they enhance autonomy, collaboration, efficiency, access to information, and flexible work arrangements [7,96]. This supports the view that digital transformation should be examined through configurational interactions between demands and resources, rather than through linear assumptions about whether technology is beneficial or harmful. For example, algorithmic monitoring and always-on communication tools are consistently linked to strain, especially when they are coupled with high workload and low autonomy, but their negative effects may be attenuated when organisations provide strong leadership, participatory decision-making, and adequate training.

The review also contributes to the socio-technical perspective by showing that employee well-being in digital transformation is shaped by the joint configuration of technological systems, work design, organisational practices, and human capabilities [6,70]. While the JD-R model explains the health-impairment and motivational pathways through which digital demands and resources influence employees, the socio-technical perspective helps explain why these pathways differ across organisational contexts. This combined theoretical framing strengthens the proposed framework by positioning employee well-being as an outcome of the interaction between digital technologies and social organisational work systems, and not as a direct consequence of technology use only.

The review also offers specific practical guidance for organisations, HR practitioners, and policymakers. The findings show that excessive connectivity, algorithmic control, information overload, and unclear digital expectations are primary drivers of digital strain. Organisations should establish clear boundaries for digital availability, including right-to-disconnect policies, restricted after-hours communication, and standards governing response expectations. Firms should also audit digital workflows to reduce redundant platforms, unnecessary notifications, and overlapping communication channels. Job designs should be reassessed to prevent unintentional workload intensification and reduction in employee autonomy, caused by automation, real-time-monitoring, and digital performance systems.

Nevertheless, the review highlights digital resources as the most consistent buffer against negative outcomes. Hence, organisations should devise strategies to strengthen

digital resources at both individual and organisational levels by investing in continuous digital skills training, particularly for emerging technologies such as AI tools, collaborative platforms, and data-driven systems. Firms should encourage employees' involvement in technology adoption decisions to increase perceived control and reduce resistance. Managers should focus more on developing their role as digital leaders who guide, support, and humanise technology use, instead of simply enforcing digital adoption.

The findings also imply that well-being outcomes are shaped early in the design and implementation stages of digital systems. Thus, organisations should adopt human-centred design principles when introducing new technologies. Digital systems should be evaluated equally for performance-related aspects, such as efficiency and productivity, as well as employee-related factors, such as effects on cognitive load, emotional strain, autonomy, fairness, and work-life boundaries. Responsible AI frameworks should address transparency, explainability, fairness, employee voice, and data protection, particularly in contexts involving algorithmic management or AI-assisted decision-making. Organisations may incorporate well-being impact assessments into digital transformation projects, akin to risk assessment, compliance, and data-protection audits.

At the HR level, the proposed conceptual framework can be operationalised as a diagnostic tool. HR professionals can develop metrics that track both digital demands and digital resources within their organisations. For instance, measures of digital workload, after-hours connectivity, digital self-efficacy and leadership support could be monitored regularly. Such assessments would enable early detection of risk areas and support evidence-based interventions before digital strain escalates into burnout, disengagement, or turnover intentions.

At the policy level, the review underscores that employee well-being should be regarded as a critical success factor in digital transformation. Policymakers and organisational leaders should prioritise regulations and standards that support healthy digital work practices, including ethical AI use, employee data protection, transparency, and rights related to digital disconnection. Industry standards for responsible digitalisation should encourage organisations to integrate well-being indicators into digital performance evaluations, together with productivity, efficiency or cost reduction indicators.

In general, this review shifts the narrative of digital transformation from a technology-centric to a human-centric perspective. The findings indicate that digital transformation outcomes depend on the balance between demands and resources; organisational design and governance choices play a decisive role in shaping employee well-being; and sustainable digital transformation requires continuous alignment of technology, people, and organisational context.

By offering a theoretically grounded and practically actionable framework, this study provides a clear agenda for future research and equips organisations with specific levers to build healthier and more sustainable digital workplaces.

6. Conclusions

This study reviewed and synthesised a rapidly expanding body of research on digital transformation and employee well-being, resulting in the identification of five aggregate dimensions: digital transformation conditions, digital transformation resources and demands, mediating processes, contextual factors, and employee well-being outcomes. Collectively, these core dimensions offer a systematic and an integrative lens for understanding how digital transformation shapes experiences across technological, psychological, organisational, and wider external environmental domains, which ultimately influence their well-being. The proposed conceptual framework offers practitioners a structured guideline to analyse, design, and manage digital transformation initiatives with a stronger focus on employee

well-being. For scholars, it serves as a conceptual foundation that can be further refined, contextualised, and empirically tested, thereby supporting the development of cumulative knowledge in the emerging field of employee digital well-being.

However, this review has several methodological limitations. First, the study relied primarily on the Scopus database and Google Scholar as a supplementary database. While these databases are widely used, they may not fully capture all relevant publications, particularly those indexed in specialised or discipline-specific databases. Second, the heterogeneity of the included studies, in terms of research design, contexts, and conceptualisation of both digital transformation and well-being, poses challenges for synthesis and may limit the comparability of findings. Third, the search strategy of the review prioritised terms directly associated with digital transformation and employee well-being as defined in the research question. The exclusion of adjacent terms may have limited the breadth of coverage and resulted in the omission of relevant studies examining employee well-being in digitally mediated work contexts. Fourth, the absence of a preregistered protocol before the review was conducted may restrict readers' ability to independently verify that all methodological decisions were specified in advance. These limitations suggest that the proposed framework should be viewed as an initial integrative model rather than a definitive representation of the phenomenon.

Future research can address these limitations by incorporating a broader range of databases and search strategy, and adopting more consistent conceptual and methodological approaches. Future systematic reviews should also consider preregistering their protocols in PROSPERO, OSF, or another appropriate registry before conducting the search and screening process to further strengthen the methodological transparency and reproducibility. Additionally, empirical studies are needed to validate the relationships proposed in the framework across different industries, cultural contexts, and stages of digital maturity.

Despite these limitations, the review offers a timely and valuable synthesis of current knowledge. As digital transformation continues to evolve, understanding its implications for employee well-being remains critical for organisations aiming to create productive, inclusive, and sustainable digital workplaces. The framework, thus, provides a useful reference point for both academic inquiry and practical application, while highlighting the need for the continued, methodologically rigorous research in this area.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/soc16070213/s1>, Table S1: PRISMA 2020 checklist; Table S2: Quality appraisal of the studies included in the review; Table S3: Characteristics of studies included in the systematic review.

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