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Leadership Approaches to Sustaining Employee Well-Being in AI-Driven Organisations: A Conceptual Framework and Research Propositions

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ABSTRACT

The rapid diffusion of artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the conditions under which employees work, creating simultaneous opportunities for productivity and threats to psychological, emotional and social well-being. Although research on AI adoption is expanding quickly, the role of leadership in sustaining employee well-being in AI-driven organisations remains theoretically fragmented. Drawing on Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory and Conservation of Resources theory, this conceptual paper synthesises the emerging literature on AI-related well-being challenges (including technostress, job insecurity and social isolation) and on the leadership responses to them. The paper develops a typology that organises the leadership approaches discussed in the literature into three clusters: technology-oriented leadership, human-oriented leadership and strategic capability-building leadership. Five research propositions and a conceptual framework are advanced, positioning leadership as the mechanism that determines whether AI functions as a job demand that depletes well-being or as a job resource that enhances it, with psychological safety and employee resilience as intervening states. The paper contributes to theory by extending JD-R theory to algorithmically mediated work contexts and by clarifying the conceptual boundaries between overlapping leadership constructs. It concludes with practical implications for organisational leaders, human resource managers and AI implementation teams, and with an agenda for future empirical research.

KEYWORDS: artificial intelligence; employee well-being; leadership; technostress; Job Demands–Resources theory; psychological safety; conceptual framework

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the dynamics of contemporary workplaces and giving rise to AI-driven organisations. Recent evidence suggests that AI-driven management can improve organisational performance by strengthening decision-making, and can support employee well-being by fostering engagement when technology is deployed with employee needs in mind (Aulia & Lin, 2025). AI-driven organisations rely heavily on intelligent systems, data-centric operations and automation to maximise their effectiveness and functional capabilities. While the integration of AI can improve productivity, it can also create challenges for employee well-being. Suvarna (2025), for instance, underlines that AI-driven predictive analytics can enhance employee well-being by enabling proactive human resource management strategies in the digital era. At the same time, the transition to AI presents obstacles, such as the need for rapid technological adaptation, changing job roles and shifting work expectations, that reshape organisational culture.

Employee well-being encompasses emotional, physical and psychological health, and AI-driven work processes affect each of these dimensions. Lee (2024) shows that the influence of AI integration depends on the demographic characteristics of workforces at the national level. Constant pressure to adapt to new technologies and anxiety about job displacement, moreover, can reduce job satisfaction and well-being. Organisations therefore need strategies that mitigate the negative effects of job displacement and protect employees' psychological well-being. In AI-driven organisations, workers often face uncertainty about their job roles and career prospects, which makes resilience an important resource for maintaining well-being. Rahmia et al. (2025) add that the requirement of

constant technological adaptation can generate high cognitive pressure and fatigue, underlining the significance of organisational support systems. Effective leadership support is therefore crucial for maintaining employee well-being during AI-centred digital transformation.

Despite the growing adoption of AI, there is still little in-depth insight into how leadership can sustain employee well-being in AI-driven organisations. Lochner, Schmoll & Kaiser (2025), for instance, highlight the influence of supervisor decisions in shaping employees' affective well-being when AI is involved in managerial decisions. The existing literature focuses mainly on technological efficiency rather than on human experience, sidelining the critical role of leadership in shaping how employees experience AI. Parinsi & Musa (2025), for example, show that AI implementation can support employee well-being through mental health chatbots that listen to employees' mental health needs and enable measurable action. Against this backdrop, the purpose of this conceptual paper is to synthesise the fragmented literature on leadership and employee well-being in AI-driven organisations and to develop a theory-based framework that can guide future empirical research. Specifically, the paper addresses two questions: (1) how does AI-driven transformation reshape the job demands and job resources that determine employee well-being, and (2) through which mechanisms can distinct leadership approaches sustain employee well-being in AI-driven organisations?

In line with established guidance on conceptual research (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015; Jaakkola, 2020), the paper adopts a theory synthesis approach: rather than reporting primary data, it integrates dispersed empirical and conceptual contributions under the lens of Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), complemented by Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989). The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 establishes the theoretical background on employee well-being in AI-driven organisations. Section 3 reviews the leadership approaches discussed in the literature and organises them into a typology. Section 4 presents the conceptual framework and research propositions. Sections 5 and 6 discuss the theoretical and practical implications, acknowledge the limitations of the analysis and outline an agenda for future research.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING IN AI-DRIVEN ORGANISATIONS

2.1 AI as a theoretically ambivalent demand - resource

A useful starting point for theorising employee well-being in AI-driven organisations is Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, which explains well-being as the outcome of an interplay between job demands that deplete energy and job resources that foster motivation and buffer strain (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). From this perspective, AI is theoretically ambivalent: it can operate as a job demand, for example through technostress, work intensification and perceived job insecurity (Tarafdar et al., 2007; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008), or as a job resource, for example by automating repetitive tasks and augmenting human decision-making. Conservation of Resources (COR) theory sharpens this ambivalence: employees experience stress when valued resources (such as competence, status and job security) are threatened by technological change (Hobfoll, 1989), and initial losses can set off further spirals of loss that make recovery progressively harder. What is not ambivalent is the stake: converging evidence links employee well-being under AI to creativity, performance and the quality of workplace relations (Zhang et al., 2025; Gandía, de Lucas Ancillo & del Val Núñez, 2025), so how the demand–resource balance is managed is an organisational as well as an ethical concern. The remainder of this section is therefore organised around this demand–resource logic: it first examines the specific AI-related demands that threaten well-being, and then considers the intervening psychological states and contextual conditions that determine whether those demands translate into strain. Both strands underpin the propositions developed in Section 4.

2.2 AI-related demands: technostress, insecurity, isolation and eroded psychological safety

The most firmly established of these demands is technostress. Well before the current wave of AI, this literature showed that the complexity, invasiveness and pace of workplace technologies generate role stress, strain and reduced productivity (Tarafdar et al., 2007; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). Recent studies converge in finding that generative AI reproduces, and partly amplifies, these dynamics: its introduction can intensify cognitive load and create sustained pressure to learn and adapt (Högemann et al., 2025), and the resulting adaptation pressure has been linked to anxiety, reduced innovative behaviour and weaker organisational creativity and performance (Zhang et al., 2025). In JD-R terms, technostress is a prototypical job demand: it depletes energy directly and,

where it persists, erodes the motivational benefits that AI might otherwise deliver (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

A second demand operates through anticipated resource loss rather than day-to-day strain. COR theory predicts that the mere prospect of losing valued resources, such as competence, status and job security, is itself stressful (Hobfoll, 1989), and the evidence bears this out: employees' awareness of smart technology, AI, robotics and algorithms is associated with lower organisational commitment and higher turnover intentions (Brougham & Haar, 2018). Insecurity, in other words, does not require actual displacement; the credible threat of it is sufficient to deplete well-being.

A third, less settled cluster of demands is social and emotional. Early evidence indicates that generative AI adoption can affect employees' emotional stability, socialisation and cognitive processes, and that the loss of human contact and overdependence on machine-mediated activity may foster isolation and erode working relationships (Filippelli et al., 2026). Relatedly, AI adoption has been linked to reduced psychological safety and, through it, to higher rates of depression (Kim, Kim & Lee, 2025). Both findings are consistent with the COR expectation that technological change threatens relational resources (Hobfoll, 1989), but because each currently rests on a small number of very recent studies, they are better treated as theory-consistent hypotheses awaiting replication than as established effects.

2.3 Intervening states and contextual conditions

These demands do not translate into strain uniformly; the literature points to intervening psychological states that carry, and can interrupt, their effects. Psychological safety, the shared belief that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999), appears to function as one such conduit: its erosion is the pathway through which AI adoption has been linked to depression (Kim, Kim & Lee, 2025). Employee resilience is a second: resilience has been found to mediate the relationship between attitudes towards AI and workplace well-being, with resilient employees coping better with changing workloads and job uncertainty (Basha et al., 2025). This mediating role is what COR theory would predict, since individuals with larger resource reservoirs are less vulnerable to loss and better positioned for gain (Hobfoll, 1989).

Contextual conditions shape the same balance from the outside. Digital working environments built on trust, support and readiness to adapt are associated with markedly better well-being, whereas mismanaged digital initiatives heighten stress and resistance to AI adoption (Avtalion et al., 2025); similarly, management mechanisms that structure the employee–technology relationship around ethical interaction help preserve psychological well-being (Gandía, de Lucas Ancillo & del Val Núñez, 2025). Leadership is the most consistently cited of these conditions: transformational leadership has been associated with job satisfaction, well-being and retention in technology-centred organisations (Normi, Priyohadi & Kusumawati, 2025), in line with the broader JD-R claim that job resources buffer the impact of demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Demographic composition may further qualify these effects, given indications that younger professionals experience adaptation pressure particularly acutely (Högemann et al., 2025), although the evidence here remains thin.

The reviewed literature suggests that the well-being consequences of AI are contingent rather than fixed: they depend on the severity of AI-related demands, on the intervening states of psychological safety and resilience, and on the cultural and managerial conditions under which AI is deployed. This is precisely the configuration in which leadership matters most, which motivates the review of leadership strategies in Section 3 and the propositions developed in Section 4.

3. LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN WELL-BEING IN AI-DRIVEN ORGANISATIONS

The literature discusses a wide range of partly overlapping leadership labels in relation to AI and well-being, including digital, affective, ethical, human-centric, AI-enhanced and strategic leadership. To reduce this conceptual fragmentation, this paper organises these approaches into three clusters, each defined by its primary mechanism of influence on well-being. Technology-oriented leadership is defined as leadership that sustains well-being by managing the technological demand itself: it reduces the intensity, ambiguity and unpredictability of AI-related job demands before they reach the employee. Human-oriented leadership is defined as leadership that

sustains well-being by supplying the relational and psychological resources, such as empathy, fairness and trust, that buffer the demands which cannot be designed away. Strategic capability-building leadership is defined as leadership that sustains well-being by building durable digital capabilities and resilience, so that employees and organisations remain able to absorb future waves of technological change. The boundaries between the clusters follow directly from these mechanisms: the first operates on the demand side of the JD-R equation, the second on the current supply of resources, and the third on the future stock of resources rather than on present demands or resources.

On this basis, each leadership label discussed in the literature can be assigned to exactly one cluster. Digital leadership belongs to the technology-oriented cluster because its object of influence is the digital change process itself (Farmanesh, Vehbi & Solati Dehkordi, 2025). AI-enhanced leadership belongs to the same cluster because it treats the technology as its lever of influence; and since mandating AI to promote well-being (Aulia & Lin, 2025) and AI-enhanced leadership (Jia et al., 2025) both use AI itself as a well-being instrument, they are merged here into a single approach, labelled AI-enhanced leadership and encompassing the well-being-centred deployment of AI. Affective leadership belongs to the human-oriented cluster because its lever is emotional support rather than the technology (Putra & Fitri, 2025); ethical leadership belongs to the same cluster because it supplies the moral resources of fairness and trust (NAZ & DISSANAYAKE, 2025); and human-centric AI leadership belongs there because it subordinates system design to human values, autonomy and dignity (Passalacqua et al., 2025). Strategic leadership, finally, belongs to the capability-building cluster because its lever is the long-term development of vision, adaptability and skills rather than the management of present demands or resources (Fantoni & Sasmita, 2025; Li & binti Norman, 2025). This clustering is consistent with long-standing evidence that leadership shapes follower well-being through both task-related and relational pathways (Arnold, 2017; Inceoglu et al., 2018), and with the concept of e-leadership, which highlights how technology transforms the way leadership influence is exercised (Avolio et al., 2014).

Technology-oriented leadership addresses the most direct source of AI-related strain: the technology and employees' encounter with it. Research on digital leadership shows that leaders who help employees navigate digital change by providing clarity, transparency and support reduce job uncertainty and strengthen engagement with emergent technologies (Farmanesh, Vehbi & Solati Dehkordi, 2025); open communication and a learning culture likewise foster an inclusive climate that supports engagement and resilience during technological adaptation. AI-enhanced leadership complements this by turning AI itself into a well-being instrument. Leaders can deliberately deploy AI to automate repetitive tasks, optimise task allocation and support flexible working, thereby lowering workload pressure, protecting work–life boundaries, alleviating burnout and freeing capacity for creative work (Jia et al., 2025; Aulia & Lin, 2025). Whether the emphasis lies on guiding employees through change or on configuring the technology in their favour, the common mechanism is demand reduction: leadership lowers AI-related demands, such as technostress, role ambiguity and workload, before they deplete well-being.

Human-oriented leadership operates where demands cannot be fully designed away, supplying the relational and psychological resources that AI-related demands consume. Affective leadership contributes empathy, emotional intelligence and individualised responses to employees' psychological needs, which is particularly important for countering the digital burnout that prolonged technology exposure and intensified work pressure can produce (Putra & Fitri, 2025). Ethical leadership supplies a complementary resource, trust: because AI raises concerns about data transparency, privacy and fairness, and because perceptions of digital ethics vary across generations, leaders must uphold ethical standards, accountability and clear communication to preserve a trustworthy environment (NAZ & DISSANAYAKE, 2025). Human-centric AI leadership extends both concerns to the design level, ensuring that AI systems are developed and implemented with human values, autonomy and dignity in mind, in line with the Industry 5.0 principle that technology should augment rather than replace human capabilities (Passalacqua et al., 2025). The three labels differ in the resource they emphasise (emotional support, moral trust and human dignity, respectively) but share a single mechanism: they replenish the psychological resources on which well-being depends.

Strategic capability-building leadership, finally, invests in resources that retain their value as the technology itself evolves. Organisations that invest jointly in employee well-being and digital capability development achieve more sustainable innovation, because strengthened digital skills reduce adaptation anxiety and build employees'

confidence in using AI systems (Li & binti Norman, 2025). Building employee resilience serves the same long-term purpose, enabling organisations to absorb the challenges of AI implementation and remain stable in dynamic working environments. Strategic leadership provides the frame within which these investments are prioritised: it combines vision, adaptability and human-centred thinking so that organisations can harness the opportunities of AI while coping with continual change, job uncertainty and shifting skill requirements (Fantoni & Sasmita, 2025). The mechanism that defines this cluster is capability-building: rather than reducing today's demands or replenishing today's resources, leadership converts episodic well-being protection into a durable stock of personal and organisational resources.

The clusters are analytically distinct but not hermetically sealed, and some labels genuinely straddle boundaries: digital leadership involves supportive communication that resembles human-oriented behaviour, human-centric AI leadership shapes design decisions that are technological in character, and strategic leadership presupposes elements of both. The clustering nonetheless holds because each label is classified by its primary mechanism rather than by every behaviour it entails: digital and AI-enhanced leadership act chiefly on the demand, affective, ethical and human-centric leadership act chiefly on relational and psychological resources, and strategic capability-building leadership acts chiefly on the future resource stock. Read this way, the three clusters are complementary elements of a leadership repertoire rather than competing prescriptions, which is consistent with evidence that workplace resources at multiple levels (individual, group, leader and organisational) jointly shape employee well-being and performance (Nielsen et al., 2017). What remains undertheorised, however, is how these clusters interact and through which intervening psychological states they influence well-being in AI-driven contexts. Section 4 addresses this gap by developing a conceptual framework and a set of research propositions. The typology and its constituent labels are summarised in Table 1.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

Building on the preceding review, this section develops a conceptual framework that links AI-driven transformation, leadership approaches and employee well-being. The framework rests on the core JD-R proposition that well-being deteriorates when job demands outstrip available resources and improves when resources match or exceed demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In AI-driven organisations, the framework positions leadership as the central mechanism that determines the valence of AI at work: whether AI is experienced predominantly as a demand (technostress, job insecurity, social isolation) or predominantly as a resource (task relief, augmented capability, flexibility). Two intervening psychological states, psychological safety and employee resilience, transmit the influence of leadership on well-being. The typology underpinning the framework is summarised in Table 1. The following subsections develop each component of the framework in dialogue with the literature reviewed in Sections 2 and 3, and derive five research propositions.

4.1 AI-driven transformation as a source of job demands

The first component of the framework concerns the demand-generating character of AI-driven transformation. The technostress literature has long established that the intensification, complexity and invasiveness of workplace technologies produce role stress, strain and reduced productivity (Tarafdar et al., 2007; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008), and recent studies confirm that these dynamics persist, and are partly amplified, in the era of generative AI (Högemann et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). Beyond technostress, AI-driven transformation threatens resources that employees value: awareness of smart technology and algorithms is associated with perceived job insecurity and higher turnover intentions (Brougham & Haar, 2018), AI adoption can erode psychological safety and increase depressive symptoms (Kim, Kim & Lee, 2025), and the displacement of human interaction by machine-mediated processes can generate social isolation (Filippelli et al., 2026). In JD-R terms, unmanaged AI-driven transformation therefore shifts the demand–resource balance towards demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This reasoning underpins the baseline proposition of the framework:

Proposition 1. *AI-driven organisational transformation increases job demands, in particular technostress, perceived job insecurity and social isolation, which, unless counteracted by leadership, diminish employee well-being.*

4.2 Technology-oriented leadership and the reduction of AI-related demands

If AI-related demands constitute the baseline threat to well-being, the most direct leadership response is to manage the technology itself and employees' encounter with it. Digital leadership research shows that leaders who provide clarity, transparency and support during digital change reduce uncertainty, mitigate technostress and strengthen engagement with emergent technologies (Farmanesh, Vehbi & Solati Dehkordi, 2025). This is consistent with e-leadership theory, which argues that advanced information technology transforms how leadership influence is exercised and must therefore be led deliberately rather than left to unfold by default (Avolio et al., 2014). AI-enhanced leadership extends this logic by using AI itself as a well-being instrument: optimising task allocation and automating repetitive workload can alleviate burnout and free capacity for meaningful work (Jia et al., 2025), and AI-driven management that is deployed with employee needs in mind supports engagement (Aulia & Lin, 2025). The common mechanism across these approaches is demand reduction: leadership lowers the intensity, ambiguity and unpredictability of AI-related demands before they reach the employee. Hence:

Proposition 2. *Technology-oriented leadership (digital and AI-enhanced leadership) sustains employee well-being primarily by reducing AI-related job demands, through transparent communication, clarity about changing job roles and the well-being-centred deployment of AI systems.*

4.3 Human-oriented leadership and the provision of psychological resources

Demands cannot be fully designed away, so a second cluster of approaches operates on the resource side of the JD-R equation. Affective leadership supplies empathy, emotional understanding and individualised support that counteract digital burnout (Putra & Fitri, 2025), echoing long-standing evidence that relational leadership behaviours are among the strongest predictors of follower well-being (Arnold, 2017; Inceoglu et al., 2018). Ethical leadership, understood as the demonstration and promotion of normatively appropriate conduct (Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005), addresses the trust deficits created by concerns over data privacy, surveillance and algorithmic fairness (NAZ & DISSANAYAKE, 2025). Human-centric leadership, aligned with Industry 5.0 principles, ensures that AI systems are designed and deployed in ways that respect employee autonomy and dignity (Passalacqua et al., 2025), while health-oriented leadership makes follower health an explicit object of leadership attention (Franke, Felfe & Pundt, 2014). Across these approaches the mechanism is resource provision: leaders replenish the relational and psychological resources that AI-related demands consume. Hence:

Proposition 3. *Human-oriented leadership (affective, ethical and human-centric leadership) sustains employee well-being primarily by supplying relational and psychological job resources, including empathy, fairness, trust and psychological safety.*

4.4 Strategic capability-building leadership and durable personal resources

Whereas the first two clusters operate on current demands and resources, the third invests in resources that retain their value as the technology itself evolves. Conservation of Resources theory holds that individuals with larger resource reservoirs are less vulnerable to resource loss and more capable of resource gain, creating positive gain spirals (Hobfoll, 1989). Consistent with this, investment in digital capabilities reduces adaptation anxiety and builds employees' confidence in working with AI systems (Li & binti Norman, 2025), and employee resilience buffers the relationship between attitudes towards AI and workplace well-being (Basha et al., 2025). Strategic leadership provides the organisational vision and adaptability within which such investments are prioritised and sustained (Fantoni & Sasmita, 2025). The mechanism here is capability-building: leadership converts episodic well-being protection into a durable stock of personal and organisational resources. Hence:

Proposition 4. *Strategic capability-building leadership sustains employee well-being over time by developing durable personal resources, in particular digital capabilities and employee resilience.*

4.5 Intervening psychological states: psychological safety and employee resilience

Finally, the framework specifies how leadership influence reaches well-being. Two intervening psychological states are proposed. Psychological safety, the shared belief that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999), is directly implicated in AI contexts: reduced psychological safety has been identified as a pathway from AI adoption to employee depression, and leadership mitigates this pathway (Kim, Kim & Lee, 2025). Employee resilience has likewise been shown to mediate the relationship between attitudes

towards AI and workplace well-being (Basha et al., 2025), and multilevel evidence indicates that leader-level resources typically affect well-being through proximal psychological mechanisms rather than directly (Nielsen et al., 2017). The framework therefore treats psychological safety and resilience not as by-products of leadership but as the conduits through which the three clusters exert their effects. Hence:

Proposition 5. *Psychological safety and employee resilience mediate the relationship between leadership approaches and employee well-being in AI-driven organisations, such that leadership improves well-being to the extent that it strengthens these intervening states.*

The framework also acknowledges boundary conditions. The relative importance of each leadership cluster is likely to vary with the intensity of AI deployment, the sector in which the organisation operates and the generational composition of the workforce, given evidence that perceptions of digital ethics and technology-related stress differ across generations (NAZ & DISSANAYAKE, 2025; Högemann et al., 2025). These contingencies are incorporated into the future research agenda in Section 6.

Table 1: A typology of leadership approaches for sustaining employee well-being in AI-driven organisations

Leadership cluster	Definition and primary mechanism	Leadership labels subsumed	AI-related well-being challenge primarily addressed	Key sources
Technology-oriented leadership	Manages the technological demand itself, reducing AI-related job demands before they reach the employee (Proposition 2)	Digital leadership; AI-enhanced leadership (incorporating well-being-centred AI mandates)	Technostress, role ambiguity, workload pressure and job uncertainty arising from AI adoption	Farmanesh, Vehbi & Solati Dehkordi (2025); Jia et al. (2025); Aulia & Lin (2025); Avolio et al. (2014)
Human-oriented leadership	Supplies relational and psychological job resources, such as empathy, fairness, trust and psychological safety (Proposition 3)	Affective leadership; ethical leadership; human-centric AI leadership	Digital burnout, emotional strain, trust deficits over data privacy and fairness, threats to autonomy and dignity	Putra & Fitri (2025); NAZ & DISSANAYAKE (2025); Passalacqua et al. (2025)
Strategic capability-building leadership	Builds durable personal and organisational resources, in particular digital capabilities and employee resilience (Proposition 4)	Strategic leadership; digital capability and resilience development	Adaptation anxiety and long-term uncertainty arising from continual technological change	Li & binti Norman (2025); Basha et al. (2025); Fantoni & Sasmita (2025)

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Theoretical contributions

This paper set out to examine how leadership can sustain employee well-being in AI-driven organisations. The synthesis indicates that AI-driven transformation reshapes the balance of job demands and resources: it can increase innovation and operational efficiency, but it simultaneously generates technostress, emotional pressure and job uncertainty that threaten employee well-being. In answer to the second research question, the analysis suggests that leadership sustains well-being through three complementary mechanisms: reducing technological demands, supplying relational and psychological resources, and building durable capabilities and resilience.

The paper makes three theoretical contributions. First, it extends JD-R theory (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) to algorithmically mediated work by conceptualising AI as an ambivalent job characteristic whose valence, as demand or resource, is determined largely by leadership. This positions leadership not merely as one job resource among many but as an architect of the demand-resource balance in AI-driven organisations.

Second, the typology developed in Section 3 responds to the proliferation of overlapping leadership labels by clarifying their conceptual boundaries and shared mechanisms, integrating constructs such as ethical leadership (Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005), e-leadership (Avolio et al., 2014) and health-oriented leadership (Franke, Felfe & Pundt, 2014) into a common JD-R logic. Third, by specifying psychological safety and resilience as intervening states, the framework connects the broader leadership and well-being literature (Arnold, 2017; Inceoglu et al., 2018) with emerging findings on psychological safety and resilience in AI contexts (Basha et al., 2025; Kim, Kim & Lee, 2025).

The framework both confirms and qualifies earlier work. It is consistent with technostress research showing that technology-driven demands undermine well-being and innovative behaviour (Tarafdar et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2025; Högemann et al., 2025), and with evidence that supportive digital climates foster well-being (Avtalion et al., 2025). It qualifies, however, the predominantly technology-centred reading of AI adoption by arguing that identical AI deployments can produce divergent well-being outcomes depending on the leadership approach through which they are enacted, a claim consistent with findings that supervisor decisions shape employees' affective well-being when AI is involved in managerial decision-making (Lochner, Schmoll & Kaiser, 2025).

5.2 Practical implications

The framework yields specific implications for three groups of practitioners. For organisational leaders, the priority is transparent communication about the purpose and consequences of AI deployment, including honest discussion of changing job roles, combined with a visible commitment to using AI for task relief rather than for surveillance or work intensification. For human resource managers, the framework implies that well-being metrics, including indicators of technostress, should be integrated into the governance of AI implementation projects, and that investment in digital capability-building and resilience programmes should accompany every major AI rollout (Li & binti Norman, 2025). For AI implementation teams, the human-centric design principles associated with Industry 5.0 (Passalacqua et al., 2025) imply involving employees in system design, safeguarding data privacy and fairness (NAZ & DISSANAYAKE, 2025), and monitoring the emotional, social and cognitive effects of deployment over time (Filippelli et al., 2026).

6. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The limitations of this paper follow from its conceptual nature. First, the propositions are grounded in a synthesis of the literature rather than in primary data and therefore await empirical validation. Second, the underlying evidence base is recent, rapidly evolving and partly concentrated in particular regions and sectors, which may limit the generalisability of the framework. Third, the analysis focuses on formal organisational leadership; team-level, shared and self-leadership processes, which may also shape well-being in AI-driven contexts, fall outside its scope.

These limitations define a research agenda. The propositions lend themselves to longitudinal designs that track employee well-being across the phases of AI implementation, thereby capturing temporal dynamics that cross-sectional studies miss. Cross-cultural comparisons could test whether the relative weight of the three leadership clusters varies across institutional and cultural contexts, while mixed-methods and multilevel studies in specific sectors, such as healthcare and information technology, could examine how psychological safety and resilience operate as mediating mechanisms (Proposition 5). Finally, future work could theorise the conditions under which AI itself takes over leadership functions and what this implies for employee well-being (Lochner, Schmoll & Kaiser, 2025).

In conclusion, this paper has argued that employee well-being in AI-driven organisations is neither an automatic casualty of technological change nor an automatic beneficiary of it: it is the outcome of leadership choices that determine whether AI is experienced as a demand or as a resource. By organising a fragmented literature into a typology, embedding it in JD-R theory and deriving testable propositions, the paper provides a foundation for cumulative empirical research and for leadership practice that treats well-being as a strategic priority rather than a residual concern.

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