

POSITIVE DIGITAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING IN THE ERA OF REMOTE WORK

Patrycja Maria Stachewicz

Student of Bydgoszcz University of Science and Technology, Bydgoszcz, Poland,
e-mail: patrycjasss01@wp.pl
ORCID: 0009-0009-9950-9790



Abstract

Purpose: This study focuses on the role of positive digital leadership in shaping employee well-being in the era of remote work. The research employs the theoretical frameworks of Positive Organizational Scholarship and the Job Demands-Resources model. The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive assessment of how remote work leaders support employee well-being, while simultaneously optimizing the utilization of work-related resources.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study was based on a qualitative methodology, utilizing semi-structured interviews with 30 employees working in remote or hybrid settings. The interpretation of the results was included in the Positive Organizational Scholarship and Job Demands-Resources models.

Findings: The survey results indicate that positive digital leadership is one of the key factors influencing the well-being of employees working remotely or in a hybrid arrangement within Polish organisations. Leaders who foster relationships that encourage positive leadership behaviours improve employees' well-being, which leads to reduced stress and increased productivity.

Implications/limitations: The study highlighted the key role of leaders in fostering the well-being of remote workers. Managers should adopt positive leadership practices that support authentic leadership, employee potential and effective resource management. The cross-sectional nature of the study limits the scope for generalisations; therefore, future research should focus on long-term effects across different technological and cultural contexts

Originality/value: This study uses the theoretical frameworks of Positive Organizational Scholarship and Job Demands-Resources in the context of remote and hybrid work in Poland. The study shows how positive digital leadership and effective use of work resources affect employee well-being.

Keywords: Positive Organizational Scholarship, Job Demands-Resources, remote work

Paper type: Research Paper

1. Introduction

In recent years, the nature of work has undergone a multidimensional transformation, largely accelerated by digitalisation and globalisation, which has led to

a shift from a stationary model to a remote and hybrid model of work (Klusek & Gilińska, 2025). The dynamic development of technology, the spread of collaborative platforms, remote working environments and systems that support decision-making have significantly changed the way managers coordinate tasks, motivate employees and support team engagement (Piotrkowska-Puchała, 2025). As a result, traditional leadership in the traditional sense of the word is gradually being replaced by digital interactions, which require leaders to have new interpersonal, technological and emotional skills (Al-Fattal et al., 2024). The remote working model offers benefits such as increased employee autonomy, flexible working hours and the ability to adapt the working environment to one's preferences, but empirical research also shows the challenges and negatives of such a system, which can significantly affect employee well-being (Picker-Roesch et al., 2024). Remote work can cause employees to feel socially isolated, weaken interpersonal bonds and relationships, and make it difficult to maintain a work-life balance (Tortumlu & Mehmet 2025; Picker-Roesch et al., 2024). Another aspect of this phenomenon is related to communication disruptions, which refer to difficulties in conveying information due to a lack of direct contact, and thus a weakening of bonds between team members through reduced integration and a weakened sense of community within companies (Polyanska et al., 2024). Although the perspective presented here largely highlights the significance of the problem, there is still insufficient information on how organisations are attempting to mitigate these difficulties while supporting the well-being and mental resilience of their employees.

The Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) and Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) models may prove useful. POS focuses on analysing the potential and strengths of individuals and entire teams in the context of functioning within an organisation (Quinn, 2003). By focusing on building psychological safety, supporting positive relationships, and promoting leadership styles based on authenticity and care (Czop, 2012), the model allows for the identification of practices that can minimise the negative effects of remote work. The POS perspective can therefore support the transformation of the digital environment into a space that helps employees take care of their development while maintaining individual autonomy. The second model, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R), enables an in-depth analysis of the relationships between job demands and available resources (Kubicek et al., 2017). In this context, relationships between the use of remote communication, pressure related to digital tools, isolation and leadership support, access to technology and decision autonomy. The model, in line with its assumptions, provides for the possibility of using resources as tools that can promote employee motivation and well-being (Kain & Jex, 2010). The combination of both perspectives provides a solid foundation for understanding how employees

function in a remote work environment. POS, focusing on positive psychological processes that support well-being, and JD-R, providing tools for identifying resources that allow for balancing the demands of digital work, enable a multifaceted understanding of how organisations can support employee well-being in this specific environment. Using a combination of these models, it is also possible to draw conclusions as to why, in some communities, this form of employment leads to increased engagement and well-being among employees, while in others, on the contrary, it becomes a factor that significantly limits individual development and leads to a decline in efficiency (Kurnyta, 2024). To sum up, the following research question can be identified: What exactly are the leadership behaviours that enhance employee well-being in a remote working environment, taking into account the POS process models and the balancing of demands and available work resources according to the JD-R model?

2. Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model

With the rapid spread of remote and hybrid working in recent years, research enabling in-depth analysis of employee wellbeing in the digital environment has become increasingly important. Currently, most studies refer only to the difficulties arising from distance, mental and sensory overload associated with the use of digital tools, and the pressure of constant availability, which can lead to a deterioration in employee well-being (Dixit & Panwar, 2023). The dominant narrative in the literature highlights the risks associated with isolation or work-life imbalance (Karczewska, 2025), thus overlooking positive phenomena. Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) represents a complete change of approach in this respect, shifting the focus away from negative aspects such as analyses of dysfunctions and deficiencies towards generative mechanisms relating to values, relationships and structures, enabling individuals and entire organisations to develop and achieve satisfactory results (Haffer, 2025). POS focuses, among other things, on positive leadership, psychological safety and a sense of meaning in work, treating these factors as determinants of employee well-being (Horzela, 2020; Quinn et al., 2003). According to this model, positive emotions and relationships, in addition to striving to provide individuals or entire teams in the organisation with psychological comfort, seek to enable them to cope with stress, complexity and pressure associated with the remote work environment (West & Derrington, 2009). J. E. Bono and R. Ilies (2006) further emphasise the role of a leader who uses positive leadership as one of the most important factors in supporting employees and influencing their well-being, while building the mental resilience of subordinates. The research indicates that leaders who use these prac-

tices were perceived as more effective, supported well-being and engagement, and led to increased individual effectiveness. Given the specific requirements of remote working, POS analysis allows us to identify factors that can act as a buffer, mitigating the negative consequences of physical distance and fragmented communication via digital tools.

The Job Demands-Resources model as we know it today was developed in response to earlier models such as the Job Characteristic Model and the Demand-Control Model, which focused exclusively on a single aspect of stress or motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). The JD-R model is an innovative approach that combines two perspectives: job demands and job resources. According to the approach proposed by Evangelia Demerouti and co-authors (2001), job demands include those elements of work – physical, psychological, social and organisational – that require sustained effort. Their fulfilment entails certain costs for the individual, which manifest themselves both mentally and physically. Job demands should be understood as stress response mechanisms, while job resources should be understood as motivation mechanisms. While working under constant stress can have negative effects on individuals, such as a decrease in engagement (related, among other things, to an excessive workload), available resources can counterbalance these effects by influencing the positive aspects of work (such as autonomy, individual support and others), leading to a reduction in mental and physical strain (Schaufeli, 2017). Research conducted by W. B. Schaufeli, A. B. Bakker, M. Salanova (2004) and J. Halbesleben (2010) indicates that high job demands associated with an excessive number of responsibilities and emotional overload can lead to burnout. On the other hand, leaders who promote autonomy, a sense of effectiveness and offer support in organisations have a positive influence on their subordinates, creating a solid foundation for increased employee engagement and well-being. It should therefore be noted that it is extremely important to balance both mechanisms (stress and motivation) in order to achieve the most effective results for individuals and the organisation as a whole. Excessive demands that are not matched by sufficient work resources result not only in a deterioration in the well-being of individuals, but also of the entire organisation. Knowing the specific requirements and work resources, it is therefore possible to determine exactly which factors reduce or increase engagement while supporting well-being.

3. Positive digital leadership in remote working conditions

Positive leadership in today's reality is becoming an important form of organisational management, especially in the era of remote and hybrid work. It encompasses behaviours of leaders that are designed to support employee well-being, psychological competencies and make the best use of individuals' potential (Gordon,

2017), despite the difficulties associated with the specific nature of the digital environment. Research indicates that leaders operating in a remote space must compensate for communication limitations resulting from physical distance, the possibility of misinterpretation due to limited direct contact or isolation (Kühnel, 2025). Positive leadership should therefore require leaders to show greater empathy and consciously and deliberately nurture relationships with employees. In practice, therefore, this type of management should manifest itself through regular contact between supervisor and employee in order to identify the subordinate's needs, while setting clear requirements for tasks and their priority (Walentek, 2003). It is important that both sides jointly define the boundaries and framework for cooperation, while strengthening the sense of purpose and promoting mutual support within the team (Brandson & Marra, 2021). According to Ragins' concept (2016), the relationship between positive digital leadership and employee well-being clearly indicates that positive relationships can act as a buffer mitigating the impact of demands on stress and well-being of individuals. Therefore, it can be concluded that these relationships are bidirectional. Additionally, M. H. Kerins (2003) emphasises the importance of authentic leadership, pointing to the need for leaders to use specific adaptive skills, which is particularly important in a digital environment. Awareness, impartial processing, actions and relationship building have been identified as the basic dimensions of authenticity. Analysing the available literature, it can therefore be concluded that an authentic leader is a leader who uses their own awareness to build relationships with others, behaves in accordance with their own beliefs, adapting them to the expectations of employees, and is aware of the importance of relationships built on trust. When used consciously and consistently, these behaviours have a positive impact on leader-employee relationships, as they focus on the strengths of both parties while building relationships that go beyond the traditional framework of work and support individual development. Effective leaders, especially in remote working conditions, should also organise individual support for individual employees, treating them as individuals rather than just part of their group of subordinates (Dionne et al., 2015). In summary, positive digital leadership should be based on individual support, clear roles, tasks and boundaries, while promoting openness and authentic relationships. Leaders who continue to implement these actions and values foster an organisational culture that focuses on positive practices, thereby supporting employee wellbeing.

4. Research hypotheses

Based on the assumptions of the POS model, positive leadership can promote better coping in remote working conditions, while supporting employee well-be-

ing and increasing their engagement. In contrast, the assumptions of the JD-R model indicate that identifying and skilfully managing available job demands (which can cause stress and other negative mental and/or physical effects) and job resources can have a positive impact on employees and, therefore, on the entire organisation. Based on a review of the available literature, research and our own observations, key factors and aspects of work that affect the functioning of employees, particularly those working in a digital environment, were identified. On this basis, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Individual support for employees is directly related to their wellbeing.

H2: Systematising remote work by leaders in terms of defining roles, tasks and requirements reduces stress among employees.

H3: Remote work leaders building long-term relationships based on trust, honesty and openness to new solutions directly increases employee engagement.

H4: Leaders who respect their subordinates' digital boundaries (encouraging breaks, protecting free time, proposing alternative solutions, etc.) reduce employee fatigue and perceived stress, which in turn allows employees to perform their tasks more effectively.

5. Methodology

The study was conducted based on a qualitative exploratory strategy, which included 30 employees working in companies based on remote and hybrid working models. A purposive sample was used, including employees representing various sectors, such as IT, online education, professional services, and finance. Purposive sampling allowed for the analysis of the experiences of people who have been working in a digital environment for at least three months, as well as different organizational structures. The recruitment process involved posting advertisements on social media and using professional networks. The diverse recruitment method allowed for greater heterogeneity of cases. The sample proved to be sufficiently diverse in terms of industry and length of service, which strengthens the reliability of the data. The empirical material was collected through individual interviews typically lasting between 30 and 90 minutes. The interviews were conducted via the Google Meets platform, which additionally allowed us to capture the specific aspect of communication using digital tools. The interview scenario was developed based on the Positive Organizational Scholarship framework (Quinn et al., 2003) and the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker et al., 2001). POS served as a perspective focusing on processes such as psychological safety, sense of meaning, positive relationships, leader authenticity, and its impact on the emotional climate of the team. The JD-R model, on the other hand, allowed us to examine the balance between the demands of remote work (e.g., digital overload,

social isolation, role ambiguity) and resources (leader support, autonomy, clarity of communication), taking into account the role of the leader as a resource provider and workload regulator. The interview questions concerned, among other things: the leader's communication methods, the perceived level of support, work boundary management strategies, the quality of team relationships, community-building practices, the sense of meaning in work, the level of energy and engagement, and experiences related to digital overload. Participants also described situations in which the leader's practices promoted their well-being and cases in which this well-being was threatened. Movavi.com, Dropbox.com, and Microsoft Office software and platforms were used for data coding. The data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach. In the first stage, the interviews were transcribed and the empirical material was reviewed multiple times to gain a general understanding of the data. This was followed by open coding, which involved identifying relevant sections of the interviews and assigning them preliminary codes describing their key content.

In the next stage, the codes were grouped and compared to identify thematic categories relating to the phenomena under study, such as digital leadership practices, leader support and employee well-being. This was followed by axial coding, which enabled the identification of relationships between categories and their organisation into coherent interpretative patterns. Finally, the main research themes were identified, which formed the basis for interpreting the results in relation to the POS theoretical framework and the JD-R model. To enhance the reliability of the analysis, the coding process was regularly verified by comparing the assigned codes and their interpretations. The interview questions concerned, among other things: the leader's communication methods, the perceived level of support, work boundary management strategies, the quality of team relationships, community-building practices, the sense of meaning in work, the level of energy and engagement, and experiences related to digital overload. Participants also described situations in which the leader's practices promoted their well-being and cases in which this well-being was threatened. Before participating in the study, participants were informed about the purpose of the interview and the study. All participants had the opportunity to withdraw at any stage of the study. In addition, the interviewees remained anonymous. The recruitment process, coding method, and interviews were conducted in accordance with the principles of research ethics.

6. Results

This section presents the empirical results of the study concerning the main objective of the research, which was to assess positive digital leadership and its impact on the well-being of employees working in remote and hybrid models.

The results presented reflect the relationships obtained in the study and allow for an assessment of their significance. The data is presented in a way that allows for systematic analysis and further reference to the research assumptions. The respondents included representatives of industries such as IT, finance, education, consulting, marketing, etc. Among all respondents, 43.33% were under 30 years of age. Respondents aged 31–40 accounted for 23.33% of the sample, those aged 41–50 accounted for 20%, and those over 50 accounted for 13.33%. The interviews and their analysis focused on four dimensions: personalised support for employees during remote work, systematisation of work, openness and authentic relationships, and respect for digital boundaries. A personalised approach in POS refers to developing employees' strengths in order to enhance their positive experiences, while in the JD-R model it acts as a resource that reduces workloads. Systematising work promotes efficiency and a sense of control (POS) and reduces overload and possible chaos caused by imprecise definition of tasks, roles and other factors (JD-R). Authentic relationships aim to build trust and promote positive practices (POS), thus constituting a resource of social support (JD-R). Openness promotes innovation and learning from each other (POS) and reduces uncertainty and supports adaptation to changing work requirements (JD-R). Respect for boundaries, on the other hand, supports well-being and a sense of respect within the team (POS), while protecting against excessive stress and strain (JD-R).

6.1. Personalised support for employees working remotely

Personalised support for employees working remotely was one of the main areas of interest during the research. This dimension refers to specific behaviours of leaders who flexibly adapt forms of communication, support and expectations to specific employees. Regular individual online meetings were among the main areas of support used by remote work leaders. Respondents indicated that these took the form of weekly meetings lasting up to an hour. Meetings were also organised as needed, as requested by employees. Respondents also indicated that the topics discussed during the meetings often went beyond strictly work-related matters. An example of such a topic was questions about general well-being, which had a positive impact on employees. One participant emphasised the importance of well-being:

“My meetings with my supervisor usually last an hour and are held every week. [...] At the beginning, we discuss work-related matters. My supervisor asks me about my current project and how I am doing. [...] What is important to me is that we don't end the meetings with just a conversation about work, but also talk about other topics. [...] Thanks to questions such as ‘What's new with me?’, I feel that my leader is genu-

inely interested in me. Such questions, although seemingly insignificant, really make me feel like a valuable member of the team, not just a number in the system.” [E22]

Respondents also pointed to the need to adapt individual communication methods to employees. People who describe themselves as introverts point to the problem of functioning in a digital environment. Such people had particular difficulty speaking up during team meetings or preferred written communication. Leaders who recognised these needs tried to create additional opportunities for such individuals to express themselves, for example by asking them directly for their opinions.

“During some meetings, I felt stressed about expressing my thoughts out loud. [...] I felt a bit overwhelmed without other people who spoke more often than me. I had the impression that my supervisor noticed my stress about speaking up at meetings. Then he would ask me directly what I thought about a given idea. [...] I felt good then because I felt that, despite everything, someone was interested in my opinion.” [E21]

In addition, respondents indicated that an important factor for them was the adaptation of communication methods by leaders. The use of various communication platforms or applications helped leaders to better tailor their support to the individual needs of employees.

“Sometimes I have difficulty participating in meetings with a camera. [...] My supervisor knows this and says that in that case I can inform him about the progress of my work via a message on the application.” [E17]

6.2. Systematisng work

The respondents indicated that leaders organised daily or weekly meetings to discuss progress on previously assigned tasks. During the meetings, task priorities were emphasised, team member roles were defined, and deadlines for completing specific tasks were set. In the absence of direct contact, the importance of clearly defining tasks and expectations was emphasised. The actions taken by leaders were perceived by respondents as activities that particularly contributed to reducing perceived stress.

“During online meetings, a lot of information is always provided. [...] That is why it is particularly important to me when the leader addresses everyone directly and tells me exactly what my task is, what I am supposed to do and what is expected of me.

[...] I also know that I can approach him after the meeting if something is unclear to me.” [E10]

In addition, respondents pointed to measures taken by leaders to limit the amount of information provided to their team members. Setting rules regarding the number of meetings per week and their duration had a particularly significant impact on reducing information overload.

“I think that limiting the number of weekly meetings has had a positive impact on my energy, motivation and efficiency. [...] Based on my previous experience, I definitely appreciate it when, for example, one meeting is organised for the team and one individual meeting to discuss all current issues. [...] This has a positive impact on the amount of work I get done because I am not distracted by subsequent meetings.” [E22]

“After the leader reduced the number of meetings, I was less distracted and found it easier to absorb information. In retrospect, I think this was one of the best practices undertaken by the team leader.” [E2]

6.3. Authentic relationships and openness

One aspect that was emphasised by respondents was the openness of leaders during conversations and the building of relationships based on trust. Leaders who spoke honestly about their difficulties and how they overcame them motivated and inspired their employees.

“I remember when I started working, I didn’t really know where to begin. Despite the training, some issues were too complicated for me at the time. [...] My leader must have seen that something was wrong and suggested a meeting. [...] We connected via video call and he asked me what was going on. At first, I felt silly saying that I didn’t understand something. However, I decided to be honest. [...] Then my supervisor said that he felt the same way when he started working. He told me what he couldn’t cope with and how he solved it. [...] I felt that I wasn’t alone and that everyone had gone through this. After that, I no longer had any reservations about telling my supervisor honestly that something was wrong.” [E3]

In addition, leaders remained open to new solutions. Most companies operate under a system of top-down procedures, so leaders who were flexible about the solutions offered by their employees actively contributed to greater team engagement.

“The company I work for quickly switched from an office-based to a remote or hybrid mode of operation. Some procedures were not adapted to this mode at all. [...] This frustrated me greatly because I knew that something could be done faster, but I was limited by the procedures. [...] I raised this issue at a meeting when my manager asked what we thought should be changed. I thought nothing would come of it. [...] My manager then told me that he appreciated my comments and considered them valid. He contacted the company’s management and presented these ideas, and a week later they were already implemented. [...] This made me feel better, as I felt appreciated and noticed, and the team worked more efficiently thanks to the new procedures.” [E28]

Respondents indicated that leaders who limited unnecessary practices aimed at controlling employees were better perceived by them and reduced their stress related to their tasks. In addition, respondents indicated that, in their opinion, the most effective form of control was to assign tasks in a clear manner and to contact them to determine their progress, for example during weekly meetings. Respondents who experienced excessive control, which required them to record their activities every hour, for example, experienced excessive stress and were less effective in their opinion. One respondent emphasised:

“If I had to give one piece of advice to remote work leaders, I would say to trust their team members. Employees also want to do their best work and don’t need to be constantly monitored. Meetings to discuss progress are, in my opinion, beneficial from the perspective of both the employee and the supervisor.” [E18]

“I experienced excessive control and, unfortunately, I have to say that it was a period of constant stress for me. The stress did not stop even when I finished work for the day because I knew that tomorrow would be the same. [...] Honestly, I thought that this was how it worked in every company. [...] When I changed jobs and met my current supervisor, I saw that it doesn’t have to be that way. [...] My current supervisor trusts me and knows that I am trying my best. We discuss work progress and any problems with assigned tasks at team and individual meetings. [...] If I had to compare these two ways of managing people, I would definitely choose the latter. I believe that with this form of control, I am more effective and perform my tasks better because I no longer feel so stressed.” [E5]

Respondents also emphasised that it was extremely important to strengthen bonds through meetings initiated by leaders. A significant proportion (66,67% of respondents) indicated that during remote work, despite team meetings, bonds are weaker than in the case of stationary work. One respondent emphasised:

“My work has been remote since I started. [...] My manager suggested an integration meeting during my first month at work. At first, I was stressed because I didn’t know anyone. However, I decided to go after my manager encouraged me. It was a good decision. [...] After meeting my colleagues and interacting with them in person, I started to participate more actively on the forum. I think it gave me more confidence. I also felt better because I knew who was on the other side of the screen and that we had a common goal.” [E30]

6.4. Respecting digital boundaries

Employees working remotely paid particular attention to issues related to digital overload. Respondents pointed to the growing number of platforms and applications they used during work, which directly translated into fatigue and decreased efficiency. Leaders who actively supported their employees by encouraging them to take breaks when tired or overloaded contributed directly to the mental well-being of their team members. One respondent pointed out that some industries operating in the creative sector are in particular need of this type of support:

“In industries such as mine, creativity is paramount. I look for inspiration, carry out assignments, use a lot of software... Sometimes I feel tired of it. [...] My supervisor allows and encourages breaks during work. It doesn’t matter to him whether I take one or ten breaks. The important thing is that the work is done well. [...] This approach is probably best for both of us. I can use my time effectively, and my supervisor receives messages from clients about a job well done, which translates into more orders and financial benefits for the company.” [E17]

In addition, respondents pointed to leaders’ practices regarding the protection of their free time. The leaders’ actions were based on not initiating contact outside working hours, not expecting employees to respond to emails outside working hours, for example, and prioritising messages when sending them.

“My supervisor does not contact me outside of working hours. Even if he sends an email, I do not have to respond; he waits until the next working day.” [E3]

“Maybe once my supervisor called me outside of working hours, but other than that, it has never happened. [...] It was a unique situation. [...] Besides, even when I receive emails, my manager always writes that I don’t have to deal with it right away and gives me a deadline, for example, two days to complete the task. There is no pressure.” [E5]

Respondents also pointed to leaders initiating contact in forms other than on-line meetings. Remote work leaders, aware that some employees may feel stressed during one-on-one meetings with their supervisor, more often used other forms of communication. One of the respondents drew particular attention to the stress he felt before such meetings:

“My supervisor is very nice, but I felt stressed before one-on-one meetings. After all, he is my supervisor. I analysed whether everything I did was done correctly and whether I made any mistakes. [...] When it came to the meetings, it turned out that there was nothing wrong, but I still found it difficult to express myself. [...] After one such meeting, my supervisor asked me if I preferred to write rather than talk during meetings because he could see that I was stressed. [...] I said that I definitely preferred this form of communication. It was easier for me, and the stress began to disappear over time.” [E30]

7. Discussion

The study focused on identifying specific leadership behaviours that improve the well-being of employees working in remote and hybrid models in Poland. The analysis was based on the assumptions of the Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) and Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) models. The results indicate that positive digital leadership in a digital environment is a key factor in achieving a balance between work demands and available resources, which confirms the assumed hypotheses. Therefore, maintaining this balance has a direct impact on the well-being of people working in the organisation. The available literature on Positive Organisational Scholarship emphasises the importance of positive relationships and effective communication as key factors that influence the long-term and effective functioning of organisations (Caza & Cameron, 2008). The remote working model offers many new opportunities, but it also poses challenges related to the limitation of direct contact. The negative aspects of this form of employment include, above all, the gradual disappearance of interpersonal relationships in the organisational environment, isolation, ambiguity of requirements due to the lack of direct communication, and the blurring of boundaries between work and private life. Therefore, the role of leaders as initiators of practices that strengthen the sense of connection and well-being of subordinates while making the most effective use of labour resources becomes particularly important. The results of the study indicate that the well-being of employees often does not depend solely on the individual. Employee morale is often the result of the quality of supervisor-subordinate interactions and the way leaders use specific leadership practices and available resources. The results of the study confirm that consciously built

ding relationships based on trust and openness supports the well-being of teams and organisations operating in a digital environment.

The available literature on the Job Demands-Resources model points out that a balance between job demands and available resources can only be achieved through effective management. Additionally, according to Bakker and Demerouti (2006), even high demands placed on employees do not always have to lead to negative effects on their well-being and effectiveness, as long as they are balanced by adequate work resources. Previous studies also point to the need to protect available work factors, such as autonomy, support, clarity of roles, and dialogue-based communication. Conscious balancing of work demands and resources by leaders can therefore reduce the risk of burnout and strengthen employee engagement (Bakker, et al., 2001). The study confirms that leaders who strive to balance job demands and resources have a real impact on employee well-being. The analysis stands out for its combination of POS and JD-R models. After analysing the study's conclusions, this combination seems to be justified. Positive leadership, in this case digital leadership, helps employees cope more effectively with the demands of the digital environment. The perspective presented allows us to conclude that in many cases, the leader is a determinant of the success of remote teams.

The study was conducted on a deliberately selected sample, which may limit the generalisation of conclusions to all organisations operating in a remote or hybrid work system. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study does not allow for examining the impact of positive leadership practices over a period of several years. Future studies should focus on analysing different cultural and organisational conditions. Furthermore, it would be reasonable to examine the identified mechanisms in the long term.

8. Conclusion and practical implications

The results of the study indicate that positive digital leadership plays a key role in the functioning of people working in remote and hybrid models in the context of Polish organisations. The analysis points to the need to develop individual employee resources that promote mental resilience related to the lack of direct interaction and engagement in conditions of limited concentration. Work resource management by leaders should therefore support and help individual employees to cope more effectively with the challenges they face when performing their duties remotely. Building relationships that go beyond the traditional and formal framework of cooperation, adapting forms of communication to the individual needs of team members, and directly taking their opinions into account can foster a greater sense of support, engagement, and overall well-being among employees working in remote and hybrid models, which confirms the assumed hypothesis.

The responses obtained from respondents also suggest that skillful management of professional requirements by leaders, such as assigned tasks, time pressure and availability, has a positive impact on the functioning of employees performing their duties remotely. Systematising work can reduce organisational chaos while giving employees a greater sense of control, which directly reduces their perceived stress levels, so the results of the analysis indicate that the hypothesis is valid. Leaders who consciously shape a work environment based on openness, trust and authenticity in relationships contribute to strengthening employee well-being and engagement, which is consistent with the accepted hypothesis. The quality of the relationship between leaders and team members is crucial. In this context, the ability of leaders to support and develop work resources, such as autonomy and a sense of purpose at work, is also an important factor. Characteristic difficulties associated with this mode of work include blurring the line between private and professional life, isolation, and, in specific cases, weakened interpersonal skills. It can therefore be concluded that the well-being of remote workers is strongly linked to work-related demands and resources.

Another challenge for remote workers may be digital overload associated with excessive exposure to stimuli or information resulting from prolonged use of electronic devices or platforms. Leaders who respect their employees' digital boundaries by encouraging them to take breaks, protecting their free time and offering flexible solutions enable employees to regenerate psychophysically, which reduces their perceived stress levels, thus confirming the hypothesis. As a result, employees can increase the efficiency of their tasks, which directly affects their perceived level of well-being and reduces the risk of burnout. An in-depth analysis of the results confirms the practical usefulness of combining positive scientific models of organisation with work-related requirements and resources, especially in the context of modern remote working. Integrating both perspectives allows for a comprehensive explanation of which positive practices of digital leaders, in specific remote working conditions, influence employee well-being. At the same time, the study points to the need for further analysis that takes into account the long-term impact of positive digital leadership and extends observations to organisations operating in different cultural and technological contexts.

The application of the theoretical assumptions of the Positive Organizational Scholarship and Job Demands-Resources models has made it possible to identify the foundations of effective positive digital leadership in the era of remote work. Based on the research, areas were identified that can enable leaders to support the well-being of their employees while making the most effective use of available work resources. The key areas they should focus on include:

- Supporting employees through an individual approach – employees are one of the most important factors contributing to the success of an organiza-

tion. Therefore, it is extremely important for leaders of remote employees to tailor forms of communication, support, and motivation to specific team members. Respondents indicated that in a digital environment, it is particularly important for leaders to show support by adapting their leadership style to specific individuals using the available work resources. Respondents perceived such behaviour as one of the motivators at work, which translated into their well-being and effectiveness. It is also worth paying attention to people who have difficulty speaking in public and supporting them by asking them direct questions, which aims to give them the opportunity to express themselves without unnecessary stress.

- Clear definition of roles, tasks, and requirements – leaders working in a digital environment should pay particular attention to clarifying the roles of each team member, precisely defining the tasks assigned to them, and specifying the requirements of the task. The introduction of such measures directly contributed to reducing stress among employees while meeting the requirements of each task. Respondents indicated that, in their opinion, a good practice introduced by leaders was team meetings with a detailed discussion of the actions that employees must take. In addition, one-on-one meetings were held, during which employees could discuss work-related issues individually.
- Trust-based relationships – organizations, and therefore also people who manage others and contribute to the development of the company, should support and actively build authentic relationships. Building relationships, especially between leaders and employees, should be based on mutual trust by promoting positive relationships. Respondents pointed out that a lack of trust, manifested in constant monitoring by superiors, was perceived negatively, thus constituting one of the main factors contributing to poor well-being at work. On the other hand, practices such as discussing progress and potential problems contributed directly to reducing employee stress and increasing their efficiency, thanks to the lack of excessive control.
- Openness and flexibility of solutions – leaders working in a digital environment operate within a specific structure, and organizations that have undergone a dynamic transition to a remote working model have encountered many difficulties related to the lack of adaptation of procedures to this employment model. Openness to new solutions is becoming an important aspect of positive digital leadership. Respondents often approached their leaders with initiatives for change, which were met with a positive response. Such actions on both sides directly contributed to increased employee engagement and efficiency through faster task completion.

- Respecting the right to rest and digital boundaries – nowadays, we hear more and more about mental and physical fatigue among employees, linked to constant exposure to technology and information overload. In the era of remote work, leaders should therefore limit the negative effects of this phenomenon by encouraging their employees to take breaks when they are tired and by not initiating contact outside of working hours. Leadership behaviours based on limiting the number of meetings and the amount of information conveyed at them were viewed positively by respondents. Information overload led to employee confusion about assigned tasks and requirements.

9. Limitations and future research

The study was conducted on a deliberately selected sample of thirty employees working remotely or in a hybrid model, which limits the possibility of generalising the conclusions to other professional groups and organisations operating in different technological and cultural conditions. The study used the Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) and Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) models, which allowed for an analysis of the impact of positive leadership practices on the well-being of remote employees. The methodology used also allowed for a comparison of job demands and resources. The use of qualitative data does not allow for a full verification of the relationships between leadership practices and organisational performance indicators. Due to the nature of the study, the possibility of assessing the long-term impact of the application of POS and JD-R concepts on employee well-being is limited. Further research should focus on the consistent impact of the application of positive and negative leadership and the management of job demands and resources over many years on the well-being of company staff. In addition, it would also be reasonable to examine organisations and employees operating in different cultural and organisational contexts. In particular, it is justified to examine the role of the leader and the positive practices he or she uses in relation to work resources.

References

- Al-Fattal, A., Walker, E. G., & Lundbohm, R. (2023). Undergraduate Business Students' perceptions about Virtual and Remote-WorkJ leadership Skills. In A. Samad, E. Ahmed, & N. Arora (Eds.), *Global Leadership Perspectives on Industry, Society, and Government in an Era of Uncertainty* (pp. 273–275). <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-8257-5>
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The Job Demands-Resources Model: state of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 317–319. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115>

- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2014). *Job Demands–Resources Theory. Wellbeing: A Complete Reference Guide Volume 3. Work and Wellbeing* (pp. 5). <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118539415.wbwell019>
- Bono, J. E., & Ilies, R. (2006). Charisma, positive emotions and mood contagion. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17(4), 317–334. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.04.008>
- Branson, C. M., & Marra, M. (2021). A New theory of organizational ecology, and its implications for educational leadership. In *Bloomsbury Academic eBooks* (pp. 95–96). <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350159662>
- Cameron, K., & Caza, A. (2008). Positive organizational scholarship: what does it achieve? *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 6–9. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1295299>
- Cameron, K. S., Dutton, J. E., & Quinn, R. E. (2003). *Positive organizational scholarship: foundations of a new discipline* (pp. 3–10; 296–328).
- Caza, A., & Cameron, K. S. (2009). Positive organizational scholarship: what does it achieve? In S. Clegg & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Behavior: Volume 2: Macro Approaches* (pp. 6–9). <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849200455.n6>
- Czop, K. (2012). *Positive Organizational Scholarship – nowynurt w naukach o zarządzaniu. Nauki o zarządzaniu - u początków i współcześnie* (A. Czech, Ed.; pp. 248–249). Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001a). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 501–508. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499>
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001b). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499–512. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499>
- Dionne, S. D., Yammarino, F. J., Atwater, L. E., & Spangler, W. D. (2004a). Transformational leadership and team performance. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 17(2), 182–183. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09534810410530601>
- Dionne, S. D., Yammarino, F. J., Atwater, L. E., & Spangler, W. D. (2004b). Transformational leadership and team performance. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 17(2), 181–182. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09534810410530601>
- Gordon, J. (2017). *The power of positive leadership: How and why positive leaders transform teams and organizations and change the world* (pp. 16–26). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Haffer, R. (2015). Determinanty i następstwa satysfakcji pracowników w świetle teorii pozytywnego zarządzania. *Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego We Wrocławiu*, 376, 152–153. <https://doi.org/10.15611/pn.2015.376.11>
- Halbesleben, J. R. B. (2010). A meta-analysis of work engagement: relationships with burnout, demands, resources, and consequences. In A. B. Bakker & M. P. Leiter (Eds.), *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research* (pp. 102–117). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203853047>
- Horzela, A. (2020). CSR in clusters in the context of positive organizational scholarship. *Scientific Papers of Silesian University of Technology. Organization and Management* 147, 142–144. <https://doi.org/10.29119/1641-3466.2020.147.10>

- Kain, J., & Jex, S. (2010). Job Demands-Control Model: A summary of current issues and recommendations for future research. In D. C. Ganster & P. L. Perrewé (Eds.), *New developments in theoretical and conceptual approaches to job stress* (pp. 102–117). Emerald Group Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3555\(2010\)0000008015](https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3555(2010)0000008015)
- Karczewska, A. (2025). Remote Work And Technological Stress In Medium And Large Enterprises In Poland. *Scientific Papers of Silesian University of Technology. Organization and Management*, 217, 157–158. <https://doi.org/10.29119/1641-3466.2025.217.10>
- Kernis, M. H. (2003). Toward a conceptualization of optimal Self-Esteem. *Psychological Inquiry*, 14(1), 14–15. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1401_01
- Klusek, M., & Golinska, A. (2025). Motywacja do pracy w biurze w dobie pracy zdalnej i hybrydowej na przykładzie firmy z branży IT. *Zarządzanie Zasobami Ludzkimi*, 3–4(163), 70–71. <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0055.2808>
- Kubicek, B., Paškvan, M., & Bunner, J. (2017). The bright and dark sides of job autonomy. In B. Kubicek & C. Korunka (Eds.), *Job Demands in a Changing World of Work Impact on Workers' Health and Performance and Implications for Research and Practice* (pp. 47–49). <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54678-0>
- Kühnel, K. (2025). *The agile enterprise: Digitalization as an opportunity for agile transformation*. In *Management for professionals* (pp. 65–68). <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-98014-5>
- Kurnyta, A. (2023). Istota pracy zdalnej ze strony pracownika i pracodawcy. In M. Gasz & A. Politaj (Eds.), *Problemy gospodarki i rynku pracy* (pp. 32–38). Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu. <https://doi.org/10.15611/2023.69.5>
- Picker-Roesch, C., Schweiker, M., Kraus, T., & Lang, J. (2024). Psychosocial job characteristic comparison between work from home and work in the office: a study from the pandemic onwards. Implications of Remote Work on Employee Well-being and Health *Frontiers in Organizational Psychology*, 2, 64. <https://doi.org/10.3389/forgp.2024.1498944>
- Piotrowska-Puchała, A. (2025). Human Capital And Motivational And Demotivational Factors. *Scientific Papers of Silesian University of Technology, Organization and Management*, 228, 511–512. <https://doi.org/10.29119/1641-3466.2025.228.29>
- Polyanska, A., Pazynich, Y., Poplavska, Z., Kashchenko, Y., Psiuk, V., & Martynets, V. (2024). Conditions of remote work to ensure mobility in project activity. In A. Hamrol, M. Grabowska, & M. Hinz (Eds.), *Advances in Manufacturing IV Volume 3 – Quality Engineering: Digitalization, Sustainability and Industry Applications* (p. 160). Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-56474-1>
- Ragins, B. R. (2016). From the ordinary to the extraordinary: high-quality mentoring relationships at work. *Organizational Dynamics*, 45(3), 228–230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2016.07.008>
- Ravikant, D., & Panwar, H. (2024). *The Benefits and Challenges of Remote Work for Employers and Employees*. In L. Rajendran, S. Chhabria Talejra, R. Simon, P. Thenmozhi, & P. Harshendu Upadhyaya Abhendra Pratap Singh (Eds.), *Multi-disciplinary Research in Arts, Science & Commerce (Volume-12)* (pp. 58–58). The Hill Publication.

- Schaufeli, W. B. (2017). Applying the Job Demands-Resources Model: a 'how to' guide to measuring and tackling work engagement and burnout. *Organizational Dynamics*, 46(2), 120–121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2017.04.008>
- Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(4), 701–716. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164405282471>
- Tortumlu, M. (2025). *Informal work and the protection of social rights: The gray areas of employment* (M. Öçal & Ö. Kutlu, Eds.) (pp. 440). Information Science Reference.
- Walentek, D. (2003). *Models of managing remote employees*. Doctoral Dissertation. Czestochowa University of Technology (pp. 41–42). <https://bip.pcz.pl/plik,2123,rozprawa-doktorska.pdf>
- West, C. E., & Derrington, M. L. (2008). *Leadership teaming: The Superintendent-Principal relationship* (pp. 4–9). Corwin.