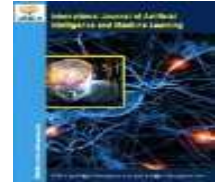




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Research Paper

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Managing Digital Stress in the Gen Z Workforce: The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Building Employee Resilience in Technology-Enabled Organizations

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ABSTRACT

The rapid digital transformation of organizations has intensified digital stress among employees, particularly within the Generation Z workforce. This study examines the level of digital stress experienced by Gen Z employees working in technology-enabled organizations and explores the role of emotional intelligence in managing digital stress and its relationship with employee resilience. A quantitative approach was adopted using a descriptive and explanatory research design. Primary data were collected from 80 Gen Z employees through a structured questionnaire measuring digital stress, emotional intelligence, and employee resilience on a five-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings indicate that Gen Z employees experience moderate levels of digital stress, emotional intelligence, and resilience. Correlation results reveal negative relationships between digital stress and emotional intelligence, as well as between digital stress and employee resilience. However, regression analysis shows that emotional intelligence does not significantly predict employee resilience. Gender-based differences in digital stress were also found to be non-significant. The study highlights the need for organizations to adopt a holistic approach to managing digital stress through emotional capability development and supportive organizational practices.

Keywords: Digital stress; Emotional intelligence; Employee resilience; Generation Z; Technology-enabled organizations

Introduction

The modern workplace is more than ever changing unlike before due to the high rate with the digital shift and the growing acceptance of work systems powered by technology. Companies in all industries are adopting digital environments, artificial intelligence, and robotic systems; this is aimed at enhancing efficiency and competitiveness. Although these innovations positively affect the organizational performance, they come with new forms of stress at the workplace related to increased workflow, constant connectivity, and cognitive load (Akbar et al., 2025). Consequently, such issues as the well-being of the employees have turned into one of the primary focus areas of contemporary business and management research. An accumulated literature has found the issue of digital stress or so-called technostress as an important challenge that emerges due to the shift to digital efforts. The perception of digital change by employees determines their experience of technostress, which, respectively, affects their job performance and work outcomes (Cini et al., 2023). Evidence-based practice indicates that an overdependence on digital technologies may result in a decrease in productivity and quality of working life unless people manage it properly (La Torre et al., 2020). In addition, the digital change geared toward the agility of organizations and crisis-readiness has shifted the roles and demands of employees, heightening emotional and psychological workforce pressure (Leo et al., 2023). The spread of the remote and hybrid working arrangements has further heightened the pressure of digital stressors. A study carried out amid the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that the most common contributor to fatigue was related to technology, especially long-distance virtual communication to a negative impact on employee mental health (Elbogen et al., 2022). Furthermore, the prevalence of mobile technologies is also revealed to induce role stress and ambivalence because employees are unable to find the balance between accessibility and autonomy (Roman et al., 2018). These results bring out the duality of workplace technologies as an enabling and a stressful factor. In the emerging digital environment, the Generation Z of employees forms a unique workforce group. Being digital natives, Gen Z employees are generally highly technologically aware; although, due to their relentless exposure to digital surroundings, they also tend to get increasingly more stressed out and emotionally drained (Roy et al., 2025). In addition to this, new types of digital work, such as flexible and location-independent work, have transformed professional identities and heightened the need to be emotionally adaptable (Prester et al., 2023).

Even though a lot of research has been done in technostress, there are still numerous gaps to be identified. First, although there are validated instruments to assess the perception of digital stress at the workplace, the empirical use of these instruments is often directed at overall populations of employees and not at generational groups like Gen Z (Fischer et al., 2021). This restricts the knowledge of the manner in which younger employees perceive and deal with digital stress in their own unique ways. Second, to date, researchers often attention on the influence of technostress singly, focusing on the conclusions (e.g., decreased job satisfaction or well-being). In-depth searches of the literature underline the necessity of combined models outlining coping styles and preventive measures instead of focusing on the description of negative consequences (Rohwer et al., 2022). Specifically, the need of emotional competencies in reducing the effects of digital stress has not received enough empirical research. Third, although digital transformation has been associated with organizational resilience in both structural and strategic levels, there is limited information regarding the role of the individual level psychological resources in driving resilience in the technology-enabled organizations (Mangalararaj et al., 2023). The latest studies tend to focus on the technological aspects rather than human aspects, which creates an absence of gap in business and HRM based research. Lastly, most of the available literature is based on a psychological or health sciences approach. Relative paucity exists in the body of research based on a direct application of both organizational behavior and human resource management that relates digital stress, emotional intelligence, and employee resilience in the workplace environment (He et al., 2023).

The justification of the research is in the increasing necessity of the organizations to create effective strategies that would help to deal with digital stress and retain employee engagement and resilience. According to the research on innovation in workplaces, adaptive behaviors, including job crafting, will be able to promote work engagement in digitally mediated settings, but these processes presuppose that employees need emotional awareness and the ability to regulate their own emotions (Costantini & Rubini, 2023). On the same note, the rising trend of using artificial intelligence-powered tools to support employees underscores the need to strike a balance between the technological solutions and the human emotional agency (Dutta and Mishra, 2024). The emotional intelligence has been recognized as an important personal ability, which facilitates the acceptance of technologies, the management of emotions, and adaptive functioning. It has been shown that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on employees in using technologies at the workplace, especially in safety-related and compliance-related environments (Kelleci et al., 2025). Moreover, knowledge sharing, organizational learning, and business performance are also supported by emotional intelligence, and it confirms its applicability to management and HRM practices (Khan et al., 2025). Human resource wise, employees who are emotionally intelligent can overcome digital complexity and keep up with positive work behaviors. Conceptual research demonstrates the interaction of technological competence, emotional intelligence, and customer-oriented behavior, in which emotional skills have a strategic value in the service-oriented and knowledge-intensive jobs (Mison and Hee, 2021). Furthermore, there is some evidence that the implementation of emotional intelligence in everyday practice allows an individual to deal with interpersonal and task-oriented needs in a more efficient manner (Pekaar et al., 2018). Digital leadership practices that emphasis on the well-being of employees are demonstrated to lower technostress and contribute to sustainable performance in the Industry 4.0 settings at the organizational level (Farmanesh et al., 2025). All of these findings suggest that it is essential to carry out empirical research that incorporates emotional intelligence into the digital stress and employee resilience models.

Research Objectives

- 1.To examine the level of digital stress experienced by Gen Z employees working in technology-enabled organizations.
- 2.To analyze the role of emotional intelligence for management of digital stress among Gen Z employees.
- 3.To observe the association between emotional intelligence and employee resilience in technology-enabled organizations.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The research methodology was quantitative research with a descriptive and explanatory research design to investigate the digital stress, emotional intelligence and employee resilience in organizations that are technology-enabled amongst Gen Z workers. The descriptive component allowed evaluating the levels of the study variables and the explanatory one allowed studying the relationships and predictive effects based on the statistical analysis.

2.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample used is a group of 80 Gen Z employees employed in technology enabled organizations, which were picked through convenience and purposive sampling methods. The targeted age was between 18 and 28 years old as employees of Gen Z to make the study relevant to the objectives. The sampling method was chosen

because of the accessibility factor and as a measure to guarantee that the respondents were exposed to the digital technologies frequently in the workplace.

2.3 Data Collection Method

The structural questionnaire was used as the means of primary data collection. The involvement was voluntary and the respondents were informed on purpose of the study which was academic in nature before data collection. The mixed-mode methodology helped increase the participation and the response rates.

2.4 Research Instrument

The tool of the research was a self-administered questionnaire consisting of four parts, including demographic data, digital stress, emotional intelligence, and resilience of employees. Measurement items were scaled to represent the workplace experiences of digital experiences and emotional capabilities, and the responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale of Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, and a higher score indicated the greater levels of the respective constructs.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The data gained were entered in Microsoft Excel. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were the descriptive statistics that were employed to summarize demographic features and the scales of digital stress, emotional intelligence, and employee resilience. A t-test was used to test the differences in digital stress based on gender and this was done using an independent samples t-test. To evaluate the associations between the study variables Pearson correlation analysis was conducted and multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the predictive power of digital stress and emotional intelligence on employee resilience.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The ethical values were also upheld in the research process. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, they were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality and informed consent was obtained before the research. No personally identifiable data was taken, and the participation was free of charge. The information was utilized only in terms of academic studies and respondents were not bound in any way to remain in the study till the end.

3. RESULTS

The following section will provide the empirical results of the analysis of questionnaire answers that were received among 80 Gen Z workers who work within technology-enabled organizations. The findings are grouped into five thematic subsections that deal with the demographics of the participants, descriptive statistics, group difference, correlation, and regression analysis.

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Gen Z Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The sample comprised participants of different genders, with a higher representation of female respondents. Most respondents were in the 26–28 years age group. The participants represented varied educational backgrounds and levels of work experience. Respondents were employed across IT/software firms, digital services or start-ups, and other technology-enabled organizations, indicating a diverse and relevant sample.

In order to give the visual representation of the demographic features of the respondents, a graphical summary was done using the distribution in percentages. Figure 1 represents the sample makeup in terms of gender, age group, education qualification, work experience and type of organization thus providing a summary of respondent profile to be used in further analysis.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 80)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	20	25.00
	Female	33	41.25
	Prefer not to say	27	33.75
Age	18–21 years	32	40.00
	22–25 years	14	17.50
	26–28 years	34	42.50

Education	Undergraduate	27	33.75
	Postgraduate	29	36.25
	Professional	24	30.00
Work Experience	Less than 1 year	27	33.75
	1–3 years	25	31.25
	More than 3 years	28	35.00
Organization Type	IT / Software	29	36.25
	Digital Services / Start-up	25	31.25
	Other technology-enabled organizations	26	32.50

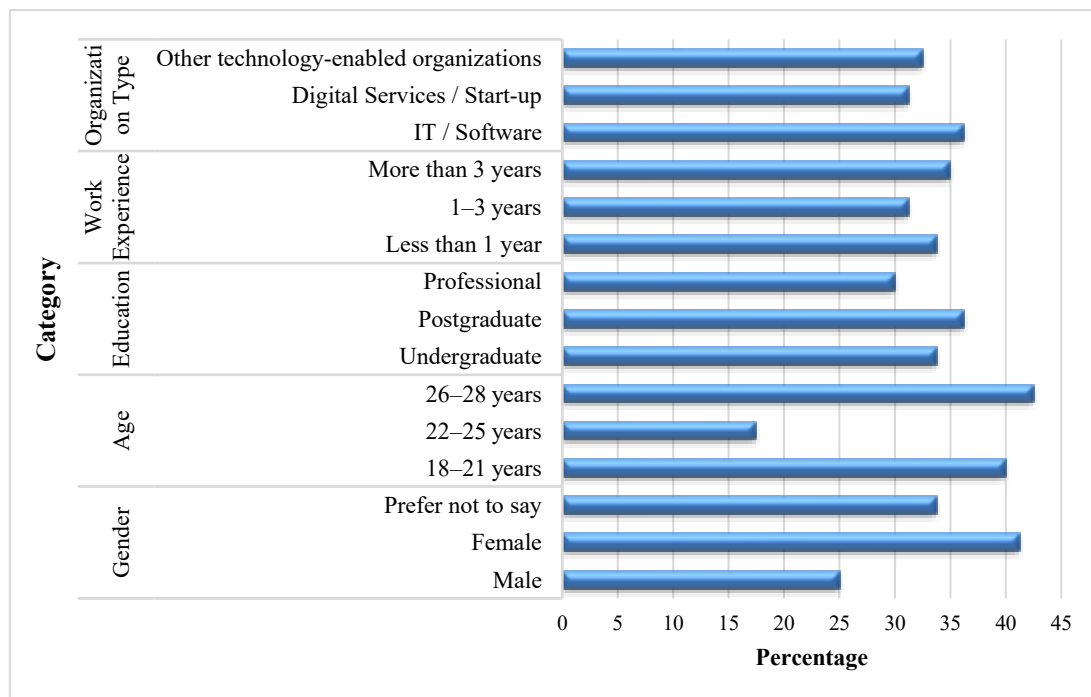


Figure 1. Demographic Profile of Gen Z Respondents

3.2 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Table 2 displays the mean and the standard deviation of the study variables. The findings show that Gen Z employees have a moderate degree of digital stress ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.64$). The means of the emotional intelligence obtained 2.941 ($SD = 0.52$), indicating the average level of emotional awareness and emotional regulation, and the means of the employee resilience were 3.033 ($SD = 0.54$), which indicated the average capacity to adjust to and overcome the problems caused by digital work.

To demonstrate the comparative levels of the most important variables of the study, a table graph of the mean scores of the digital stress, emotional intelligence, and employee resilience was drawn. Figure 2 represents the visual comparison of the average levels of these variables in the employees of Gen Z who work in organizations that use technologies.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Digital Stress	3.06	0.64
Emotional Intelligence	2.94	0.52

Employee Resilience	3.03	0.54
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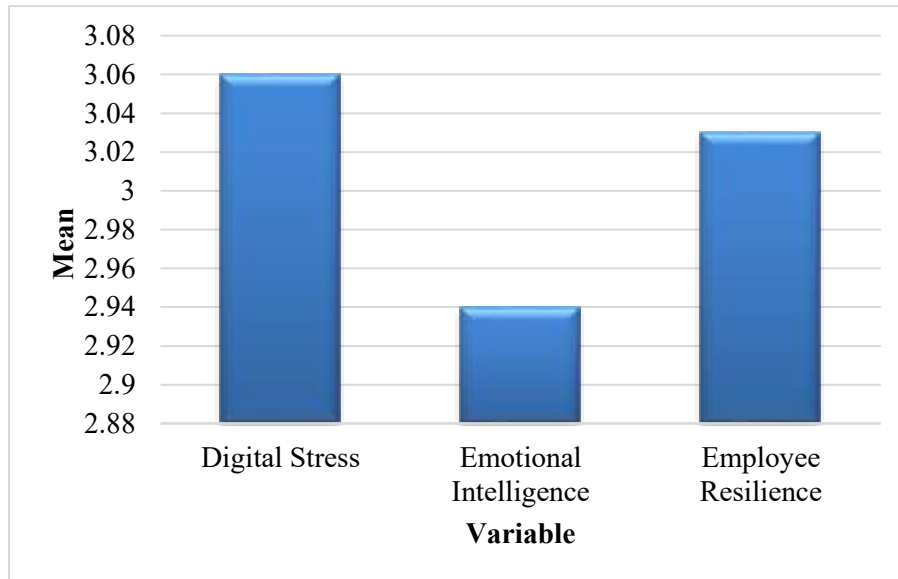


Figure 2. Mean Scores of Digital Stress, Emotional Intelligence, and Employee Resilience

3.3 Gender-Based Differences in Digital Stress

The independent samples t-test was used to check whether there was a significant change between the level of digital stress between male and female respondents, the results of it are in Table 3. Male respondents had a mean score of 3.050 on digital stress and the female respondents had a mean score of 3.091. The analysis produced a t value of -0.242 with p value of 0.810, which included the fact that the difference in the manifestation of digital stress levels among the genders was statistically insignificant.

To qualitatively compare the level of digital stress between the two groups of respondents (male and female) the means score of digital stress in men and women were plotted. Figure 3 gives a graphical depiction of the difference in perceived digital stress among Gen Z employees by gender.

Table 3. Independent Samples t-Test for Digital Stress by Gender

Gender	Mean Digital Stress	t value	p value
Male (n = 20)	3.05	-0.24	0.81
Female (n = 33)	3.09		

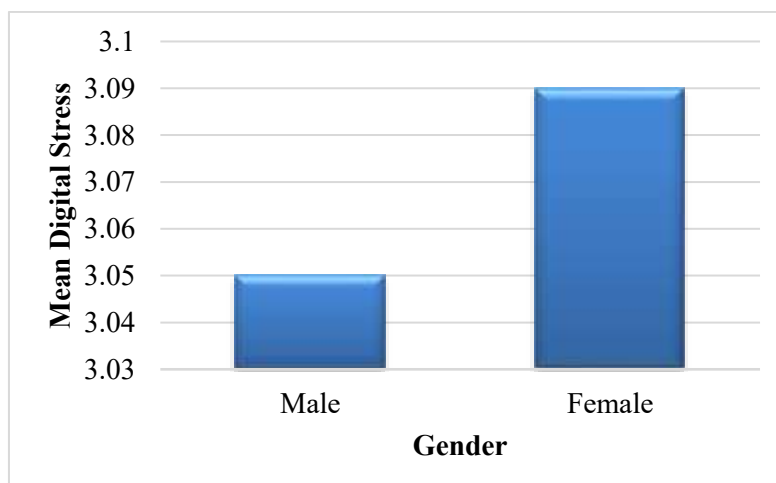


Figure 3. Gender-Wise Comparison of Mean Digital Stress Levels

3.4 Relationships among Digital Stress, Emotional Intelligence, and Employee Resilience

To test the relationships between the variables in the study, Pearson correlation study has been done as shown in Table 4. Findings show that, digital stress and emotional intelligence have a negative correlation ($r = -0.14$) which implies that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with perceived digital stress. Digital stress also demonstrated significant negative correlation with employee resilience ($r = -0.085$), whereas emotional intelligence demonstrated low negative correlation with employee resilience ($r = -0.07$).

Table 4. Relationships among Digital Stress, Emotional Intelligence, and Employee Resilience

Variables	Digital Stress	Emotional Intelligence	Employee Resilience
Digital Stress	1.00	-0.14	-0.08
Emotional Intelligence	-0.14	1.00	-0.07
Employee Resilience	-0.08	-0.07	1.00

3.5 Predictive Effects of Digital Stress and Emotional Intelligence on Employee Resilience

The multiple regression analysis has been conducted to compare the predictive outcome of digital stress and emotional intelligence on employee resilience, the findings of which are presented in Table 5. Digital stress had a negative and not significant impact on employee resilience but emotional intelligence also had a negative and non-significant impact. The regression model accounting all the variance in employee resilience was not significant and explained 1.5 per cent of the variance.

Table 5. Predictive Effects of Digital Stress and Emotional Intelligence on Employee Resilience

Predictor	Unstandardized β	Standard Error	t	P
Constant	3.56	0.49	7.21	0.00
Digital Stress	-0.08	0.09	-0.86	0.39
Emotional Intelligence	-0.09	0.11	-0.78	0.43

Model statistics: $R^2 = 0.01$; Adjusted $R^2 = -0.01$; $F(2,77) = 0.59$; $p = 0.55$.

4. Discussion

The study results showed that Gen Z workers in the technology-enabled organizations have an intermediate amount of digital stress, which implies that despite the fact that digital technologies are part of their work, they also present significant psychological pressure. Although being digital natives, Gen Z workers do not seem to be resistant to the pressures that come with unlimited connectivity, excessive information, and accelerated technological progress. This observation underscores the fact that technological familiarity is not enough to be stress-free in digitally-intensive working conditions. The respondent emotional intelligence was also moderate, which implies an average level of ability to identify, control, and handle emotions at the workplace. This is an indication that Gen Z employees have only basic skills in emotional coping, but might not have more advanced emotional regulation mechanisms that they can use to manage the extended digital pressures successfully. Employee resilience showed a medium level, which is a decent but not a high capacity to cope with the digital challenges and to overcome work-related strain. The correlation study showed that there were negative relationships between digital stress and emotional intelligence as well as digital stress and employee resilience. Even though these correlations were weak, the direction of these correlations indicates that, as the emotional intelligence level rises, the perceptions of digital stress decrease and, conversely, the adaptive capacity of employees decreases. The regression analysis also revealed that both the digital stress and emotional intelligence did not significantly predict the employee resilience hence resilience in technology-enabled situations could possibly be affected by more organizational, contextual or personal factors than the ones studied in this paper.

The intermediate values of digital stress, as in this case are in line with earlier studies that treat digital stress as a complex phenomenon that is experienced even by the technically skilled employees. The digital stress scales of various settings have also shown moderate stress, which highlights that the digital stress condition is not exclusive to un-skilled and less techno-adaptive employees (Sevic et al., 2024). The negative correlation between digital stress and emotional intelligence is consistent with previous studies, indicating emotional regulation as a protective factor in technostress-related demands management (Tarafdar et al., 2019). The low and negative correlation between digital stress and employee resilience is shaped by the existing body of research concerning teleworkers and digitally mediated work whereby the higher the technological demand

the lower the job satisfaction and well-being (Suh and Lee, 2017). Nevertheless, the non-significant predictive values in the regression analysis are not in line with the research that highlights the strong associations between digital work design and the individual outcomes. Indicatively, studies with a work design lens have identified that autonomy, task clarity, and helpful digital systems should have a significant impact on employee welfare and adjustment (Wang et al., 2020). This finding of no meaningful predictive power of emotional intelligence on resilience is opposed to integrative models, according to which emotional capabilities are key factors in successful digital transformation (Trenerry et al., 2021). This difference can be justified by the fact that Gen Z workers are relatively young and at an early stage of their career, which means that they might be more dependent on the support systems within an organization rather than inherent emotional capabilities. Furthermore, earlier research on managerial or senior populations of employees has found higher associations between digital pressure and well-being consequences (Zeike et al., 2019), implying that job role and responsibility levels can help to condition such associations.

The results provide a number of valuable conclusions to managers and human resources professionals of technology-enabled companies. To begin with, moderate levels of digital stress among Gen Z employees means that even digitally savvy employees need to be proactively managed through stress management strategies. The companies are advised to work on creating balanced digital workflows, establishing clear communication standards, and decreasing the expectations of 24-hour accessibility.

Second, moderate scores on emotional intelligence and resilience demonstrate the necessity of acquiring emotional skills. The HR interventions can include emotional intelligence training, resilience-building workshops, and digital well-being programs that can assist the employees to be more capable of coping with the digital demands. Third, since the individual factors are not so predictive, the organizations are advised to supplement the individual-centered interventions with organizational-level interventions, such as leadership practices, supportive organizational culture, and flexible work policies.

Although the study has some contributions, it has limitations. The sample was only 80 respondents, which can be a limitation to the generalization of the results. Selection bias can also be caused by the convenience and purposive sampling. Besides, the research was based on self-reported data, which can be vulnerable to common method bias and social desirability factors. The cross-sectional design also restricts the causal inferences that can be made on the variables of the study.

Further studies can overcome these weaknesses by using more and wider samples found in various industries and regions. Longitudinal research may help to gain a better understanding of how digital stress, emotional intelligence, and resilience change through time. Further research can also look at the mediating and moderating variables, e.g., the organizational support, leadership style, job autonomy and digital competence to gain a better insight into the mechanisms that underlie employee resilience in technology enabled organizations. Comparison of generational cohort studies might also contribute to knowledge of generational differences in the experience of digital stress.

5. Conclusion

This study has discussed the issue of digital stress among Gen Z workers in organization that use technology and how emotional intelligence can help them cope with digital stress and be resilient employees. The results have shown that Gen Z workers feel moderately stressed about digital life, which means that constant exposure to digital technology, constant connectivity, and quick technological shifts are somewhat challenging even to digitally savvy employees. This highlights the fact that digital nativity cannot help to kill stress due to work-related stress in technology-intensive environments. The findings also suggest that Gen Z employees have moderate levels of emotional intelligence and employee resilience. The negative correlations amid digital stress and emotional intelligence, and digital stress and resilience observed, indicate that the emotional awareness/regulation can be useful in reducing perceptions of digital stress, and increased digital stress can undermine the adaptive capacity. Nevertheless, the regression analysis presented that emotional intelligence was not a significant predictor of employee resilience, which indicates that resilience at workplaces under technology might be determined by a wider range of organizational and situational conditions rather than individual emotional abilities. In general, the results highlight the role of using a holistic approach towards dealing with digital stress in organizations. Programs to enhance emotional intelligence are still important, but organizational support systems, organizational leadership, and computer work structure are equally important in increasing employee resilience. The research will advance the literature on organizational behavior and human resource management as it will offer empirical evidence of the digital stress Gen Z employees experience and show the necessity to introduce both individual- and organizational-level interventions that will allow ensuring sustainable employee well-being in technology-driven workplaces.

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