

Digital Workplace Well-being Initiatives: Exploring Intentions and Experiences

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To my loving parents, siblings, & family

Abstract

In the volatile post-pandemic landscape, organizations have accelerated the adoption of Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) and automated well-being initiatives to combat rising levels of stress, absenteeism, and disengagement. However, a persistent implementation gap remains between management's intended well-being strategies and the subjective lived experiences of the workforce. This research employs a multi-methodological approach by integrating longitudinal qualitative interviews and quantitative Cranet survey data across private and public sectors to investigate how HR acts as a critical bridge in this digital-human divide.

Theoretically this dissertation reveal that while high e-HRM maturity and automation can significantly reduce burnout and enhance organizational trust, their success is often undermined by managerial myopia - a focus on narrow metrics over human context. A recurring well-being paradox is identified where employees participate in digital interventions (such as pulse surveys) not for personal growth, but as a strategic manoeuvre to protect social resources and organizational belonging. The study emphasizes that HR must move beyond being a mere provider of digital tools to becoming a Strategic Guardian of well-being. By fostering a culture of coworkership and workplace care, HR practitioners play a pivotal role in translating administrative data into tangible resource convoys that meet the actual needs of the workforce.

The results suggest that reducing the implementation gap requires HR to advocate for well-being-by-design, ensuring that digital health tools prioritize user experience and reciprocal social exchange. This research contributes a new conceptual framework for Human-Centric Digital HRM, providing empirical evidence that the success of well-being initiatives is not a function of technological maturity alone, but of HR's ability to synchronize management's strategic intent with the employee's experiential trajectory in a digitally prone world.

Keywords: *Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM), Implementation-Intention Gap, Workplace Well-being, Strategic HR Initiatives, Managerial Myopia, Coworkership and Workplace Care, Resource Caravan, Reciprocal Psychological Contract.*

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List of papers

This dissertation is based on the following articles and a book chapter.

Paper 1. Rony, N. & Tengblad, S. What encompasses workplace well-being in contemporary time: A qualitative investigation in multiple industries in Sweden. Presented at the *British Academy of Management (BAM) Conference 2025*, Kent Business School, Canterbury, United Kingdom.

Paper 2. Rony, N. & Tengblad, S. Beyond Digital Implementation: Pulse Survey Initiatives. Prepared to be submitted at the *Personnel Review*, Emerald Publishing Limited in 2026.

Paper 3. Rony, N. & Tengblad, S. Digital health tools and workplace well-being: The perspectives of employees and HR professionals at work. Submitted at *The Bottom Line Journal*, Emerald Publishing Limited in February 2026.

Paper 4 (book chapter). Einarsdottir, A., Olafsdottir, K., Rony, N., & Tengblad, S. (2026). Effects of automation on employee well-being: Curse or a blessing?. (*In Press*) Book chapter 8 in *The Handbook of e-HRM* (eds) by Holm, et al., Edward Elgar publishing, UK.

Paper 5. Rony, N., Sarwar, S., Tengblad, S., & Dellve, L. (2026). E-HRM Maturity and Performance in Nordic Companies. Submitted at the *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*.// also presented as conference paper at the *European Academy of Management (EURAM)* in 2025, University of Florence, Italy.

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List of abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CI	Confidence Interval
CIPD	Chartered Institute for Personnel Development
COR	Conservation of Resources
DHRM	Digital Human Resource Management
e-HRM	Electronic Human Resource Management
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GT	Grounded Theory
HRM	Human Resource Management
M	Mean
MBI	Maslach Burnout Inventory
MD	Mean Deviation
OHSM	Occupational Health and Safety management
SD	Standard Deviation
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SHRM	Strategic Human Resource Management
WPHP	Workplace Health Promotion

1. Introduction

What happens when organizational initiatives, through new technology, within a digitally prone environment of an organization, try to contribute to employee well-being? How is Human Resource Management (HRM) looking after those digital well-being initiatives for workplace health promotion? Will those well-being initiatives be successful for the people and their organizations? How would the adoption (intention and implementation) of those strategies for digital tools be responsible for looking after the overall organization development? A core belief is that human resource (HR) contributions can facilitate the attainment of organizational objectives by promoting collaborative success, particularly when employees' needs for care and respect in relation to their service to the organization are adequately met. This cultivation of care and respect could be achievable when HR department prioritizes the implementation of a comprehensive range of wellness initiatives. These initiatives may include the deployment of digital applications and tools, as well as the adoption of innovative solutions designed to create a supportive organizational ecosystem. This connects to my thesis, which brings an empirical discussion of workplace well-being attributes in the post-pandemic time. It contributes to the knowledge of how digital HR well-being tools and initiatives were contributed, delivered, and experienced by the employees and management embedded in this contemporary technologically evolving globalized culture for a healthier working environment.

Advancements in technologies, such as artificial intelligence, remote work, virtual collaboration, and flexible working arrangements have reshaped HR into a new dimension differing from traditional working patterns (Malik et al., 2023; Parry & Battista, 2019). This straightforward transactional

relationship between employees and organizations has not remained in the form of nine-to-five workday jobs, or a desk and a cubicle (Itam & Ghosh, 2020; Raksakhwamdee et al., 2026). Today's employees now prioritize more than emoluments (Raksakhwamdee et al., 2026). They are more focused on their development opportunities, work-life balance and well-being. Alongside this, the COVID-19 pandemic is also responsible for rapid changes and led HR to accelerate in prompting digital and actionable initiatives on well-being and remote work (Raksakhwamdee et al., 2026; Whitter, 2021). This new landscape has underscored the importance of employee experience and the unseen gap between management intention and implementation (Plaskoff, 2017, p. 136). The extent to which employees perceive their work environments as understanding and responding to their diverse needs has been demonstrated to influence retention rates, employee turnover, productivity levels, and innovation outcomes (Mosley & Irvin, 2020). The pandemic has not only shifted to new work practices (e.g., remote work) but has also re-specified existing structures. Flexibility at work, boundaryless connectivity, activity-based office places, and the utilization of digital tools became the primary workplaces and changed the conditions for employees' everyday well-being at work. Despite the variations in understanding the importance of employee experience, some scholars (e.g., Purcell & Hutchinson, 2006; Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015) define it as narrowed to HR processes; for instance, benefits, policies, or service-level agreement through efficiencies, all managed by and through HR. In alignment with this view, I argue that HR practitioners function as essential architects of the modern work environment. By leveraging Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM), HR can shift the organizational narrative toward a culture of well-being, ensuring that the employee experience remains deeply human and supportive, even as our workplaces become increasingly digitized.

DHRM consists of the disposition, role, and contribution of technology to manage human resources strategically at work (Thite, 2018). Recent digital development in organizations has repositioned the application or operation of HRM functions and has created value internally and externally through end-to-end, closed-looped HRM processes. These are apparently visible in recruitment, onboarding, training and development, performance, and service quality (Betchoo, 2016). The major achievement by the organization is the strategic integration of digital technologies into HR practices. Digital transformation in HRM may generate organizational value by utilizing innovative tools to modernize processes, ultimately yielding improved efficiency and fostering innovation.

An article published in the *Harvard Business Review* entitled ‘It is time to say goodbye to the Department of Human Resources’ by Ram Charan (2014) says that based on research results, CEOs around the globe are disappointed with HR people. Charan (2014) highlighted the ambiguous role of HR—one that is transactional, mainly focusing on managing people at work—while simultaneously transformational; a more strategic, farsighted, and externally facing role. However, there is a need to reposition the strategic role of HR, as organizations strive to navigate numerous complex patterns in a post-covid world that is more digital in recent times. For instance, forces for change in the external environment are accelerating the need for organizational transformation and for HR to provide them with support. Next, technology is driving rapid digital transformation across organizations, and HR functions are no exception, with the development of advanced e-HRM (electronic/DHRM) solutions (Gigauri, 2020). Such situations have led organizations to focus more on people, who are irreparable and inseparable resources. Hence, their focus particularly concentrates on promoting people’s work-related health and well-being to retain employees and improve organizational performance. Numerous activities promoting physical

wellness through health intervention tools, supporting mental health, and other comprehensive health management policies, strategies, and programs are increasingly frequent in today's workplace.

However, it could be argued that HR has come this far thanks to management's decision to lead the process of well-being promotion due to their superior position, organizational expertise, and high credibility at organizations (Chenoweth, 2022). One of the drivers of high performing health- and work behavior outcomes is building healthy organizational cultures, as most of the time, our actions, behaviors, attitudes, health condition, and self-esteem are highly influenced by our co-workers and workplace culture (Holmgren et al., 2010). A firm can successfully transform into a health-promoting landscape when there are opportunities for HR to develop and formulate multilevel directions across all units, where employees from top managers to middle managers with wellness champions on staff are provided opportunities to become involved in wellness strategies to create a healthy workplace culture (MacDermid et al., 2008).

To ensure healthy life and promote well-being at all ages, Good Health and Well-being is the 3rd Sustainable Development Goal by the United Nations (Eurostat, 2021). Modern scholarship highlights a paradigm shift where HR functions as a dual advocate, balancing management's objectives with a role as the strategic guardian of employee well-being (Malik et al., 2023; Zwiech, 2025). This guardianship involves taking proactive, strategic actions to mitigate the psychosocial risks of the digital workplace (Theres & Strohmeier, 2024).

Traditional health and safety at work generally focuses on risks, accidents, and problems. Over time, this focus has moved towards promoting health and well-being, especially after the pandemic and rise in digitalization at work. In Sweden, 31% of workers work from home one to five days per week, and

among ‘office workers’, 10%–40% work more than half part of the week from home (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2025). The work environment can help foster good health and improve societal health. Work on healthy workplaces must be prioritized, according to The Swedish Work Environment Authority and The Swedish Government (The Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2024). However, there may be other conditions shaping a healthy workplace in digitized contemporary settings aside from the aforementioned health-promoting conditions, or the conditions shaping the risk of illness.

The Swedish Government has tasked the Swedish Work Environment Authority and the Swedish Agency for Work Environment Experts with compiling and reporting on health factors at work (A2018/01350) (Government Communication, 2020/2021). Seventeen such factors include employees' perceptions of safety and support in the workplace, opportunities for professional development, as well as the ability to assume responsibility, exercise agency, and participate in decision-making processes.

Other examples of health factors include good leadership, communication skills, a workplace in which values are shared, the way tools and workplaces are designed can also promote health (Policy for 2021-2025). Besides, developing healthier employees results in a more productive workforce, as well-designed well-being initiatives and strategies adopted by HR may create a competitive advantage with a win–win situation for both employees and organizations in this digitally focused world. I argue that the well-being of employees is crucial and health promotions are equally increasingly important, while scientific knowledge about the effects and vulnerability of such promotion is scarce considering the digital means.

1.1. Research Problematization

1.1.1. Overview of Digitalization of HRM

The rapid growth of globalization, emulous competition and cutting-edge, insurmountable technological advancement has made the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) exceptionally robust and intricate by nature (Jackson et al., 2014; Parry & Battista, 2023). Thus, information technology has become a strategic means of developing and creating competitive advantage in the business world (Bhardwaj, 2000). Much of the transformation of technological involvement has been observed in various functions of human resource management. Examples include recruitment and selection, manpower planning and forecasting, compensation and benefit, reward and recognition, performance management, training, and development, as well as career management and development (Bondarouk & Ruël, 2013; Lengnick-Hall & Moritz, 2003; Parry & Tyson, 2010).

HRM activities and functions in most organizations are progressive towards embracing digital/electronic HRM (e-HRM) to enhance and experience its strategic decision-making capability (Parry and Tyson, 2011). Along with this, the integration of IT in HRM adds strategic contributions through cost effectiveness and quick service delivery, working as a competitive advantage within the organizations (Bondarouk et al., 2017). Simultaneously, the introduction of IT to businesses has an immediate effect on work designs, work processes, workforce, and workplaces (Parry & Battista, 2023). Such effects lead HR professionals to face both unlimited challenges and opportunities through strategic contributions to achieve organizational success (Van den Berg et al., 2020).

In their conceptual paper, Lepak and Snell (1998) discussed the three types of E-HRM consequences: operational, relational, and transformational. Operational consequences represent efficiency and effectiveness of the

business service or product, leading to cost savings. Relational consequences reflect on service delivery improvements for all sorts of internal and external HR customers, and finally, transformational consequences were involved in strategic re-positioning and change management, adding restructuring of HR service delivery, increased use of service centers, outsourcing, and business partnering (Lepak & Snell, 1998). This is similar to what Sareen and Subramaniam (2012) have identified as three key drivers of e-HRM: relational, operational, and strategic drivers.

Meanwhile, research still mentions that there is a need for more research on e-HRM, along with digital tools that contribute to employee well-being, due to lack of rich literature from a strategic perspective with empirical evidence from the industry (Nayak et al., 2025). Chowdhury and colleagues (2024) argue that the rapid adoption of AI and e-HRM has outpaced our scientific understanding of its psychosocial risks. They call for interdisciplinary studies that move beyond simple surveys to understand how ‘algorithmic pressure’ affects mental health and autonomy. Research largely focuses on organizational-level outcomes (Return on investments, efficiency) rather than on the ‘mutual gains’ model where both the firm and the employee benefit (Hu & Lan, 2024).

For instance, employee absenteeism has been a consequence and outcome variable for input variables such as job satisfaction and employee performance and could be studied in more depth to better understand the empirical causal of e-HRM maturity in workplaces. Empirical studies related to pulse surveys and other digital well-being tools commercially offered to organizations require more exploration by the research community to dig deeper into the reality of e-HRM applications and its prospective future in organizations. There is a research-practice gap, where existing literature lacks comprehensive insights into how HR strategies can move from just

monitoring well-being to strategically fostering it through digital architecture (Zwiech, 2025).

1.1.2. People, well-being, and their importance in organizations

“If we leave the human factor out of our business calculations, we shall be wrong every time.”

----William H. Lever, founder of Lever Brothers

People are strategic valuable resources for entities (Popescu & Kyriakopouōs, 2022) and can be a lifeline for any success-oriented organization (Rony & Suki, 2017) due to their unique ability to enable growth, self-development, and self-awareness (Popescu & Kyriakopouōs, 2022). Technological advancement, globalization, and sustainability issues have led to a faster connecting world, with organizations focusing more on assiduously developing their manpower to cope up with the current flow of competition within the industry. In accordance with established principles, the central precedence of HR strategy by HR professionals is to secure and maintain the right kind of human resources for the viability of the firm (Haesli & Boxall, 2005). However, employers today are much more focused on their employees' work-related health and well-being, which are vital for a well-balanced workplace environment. Well-being is one of the main indicators of success-oriented organization, due to the underlying connection between the health and performance of an employee (Juniper, 2011).

There is a hypothesis on the well-being issue; namely that the healthier and happier an employee is, the more productive s/he is likely to be in the workplace (Juniper, 2011). Studies and theoretical developments confirm this assumption from the last decade; take, for example, the Job-Demand Resource model (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Most previous literature on well-being mainly focused on aspects of employee satisfaction, work

engagement, health perception, vitality, and work–life balance. Other studies have focused on the unbalanced conditions, such as stress, burnout, and ill-health issues (Bakker, et al 2023), while factors such as the relationship of the impact of HR practices (e.g., communication, compensation, training, and development) and the well-being of an individual still remain largely underexplored (Bakker, et al 2023). Assumptions are developed through extensive review and inquiry of various academic literature on relevant topics associated with HRM research. Furthermore, and similar to the systematic management of occupational health and safety (OHSM), strategies related to well-being initiatives at organizations (e.g., workplace health promotion, WPHP) often fall short of their potency due to their stand-alone and isolated characteristics in day-to-day business activities (CIPD, 2022). CIPD (2022) stresses that organizations still lack well-being (compensation benefit) initiatives or strategy implementation, as they are yet to merge all units through embracing a health and well-being agenda.

To be more elaborate on the view of well-being at work, it has become an important discussion topic across the current practice- and academic worlds. More specifically, discussion arises when organizations tend to understand that human resources are difficult to manage, but a competitive advantage when their skills are inimitable by the competitors. In addition, a greater interest lies in employee performance and productivity, which matters most for the business organizations to ensure their sustainability over a period of time. However true to the notion, academic HR scholars (e.g., Beer et al., 2015; Guest 2017) have raised questions by shifting their focus to other important aspects of HR perspectives (i.e., well-being, communication skills, health-oriented leadership, innovative work practices) rather than identifying the connection of HR-performance links within the organization.

For instance, Beer et al. (2015, p.431) expresses that HRM research has long been dominated by the shareholder primacy model, which measures the success of HR practices solely through the lens of financial profitability. Consequently, the interests of direct stakeholders—particularly employees—have been relegated to the sidelines, creating a critical deficit in our scientific understanding of how organizational strategies impact employee well-being and long-term workforce sustainability. Additionally, employees with friendly work environments, safe interaction/communication, and other perspectives where HR is able to contribute to having a safer workplace for the organization to focus more on employees' needs, and not necessarily the objectivity of the organization even during uneven times. HR initiatives, followed through policy formulations and the intention to implement well-being-related activities, are essential to note, and throughout the whole thesis, the importance of such HR initiatives will be discussed recursively.

Recent research indicates that employees across various sectors are experiencing diminished well-being, prompting an increasing number of organizations to adopt digital wellness interventions as a means of mitigating this escalating issue (SHRM, 2024). According to SHRM (2024), research findings suggest that diminished well-being is associated with reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and high turnover, underscoring the strategic importance of promoting well-being at work. Digital initiatives, through applications, chatbots, websites, and wearable devices, (many of which are augmented by advancing artificial intelligence) can incrementally support employees in managing mental, physical, and financial wellness challenges if management and organization have the right kind of intention and implementation and reliance on those tools. These tools offer convenience by accommodating individual schedules and mitigating associated stigmas. Furthermore, they present a cost-effective solution for

organizations aiming to address workforce issues that contribute to diminished performance and productivity.

1.2. Thesis aim and question

The focus of my project is to explore the empirical realm of employee well-being through the means of digital tools and services at the workplace. The compiled papers contribute to the knowledge of how well-being initiatives in general are intended to be implemented by management and experienced by employees. We also compile cases where HR initiatives are embedded in the recent technologically evolving globalized culture to support a better healthy working environment. The papers evolve around HR initiatives designed to promote and support well-being in the contemporary conditions of organizations with remote work, the adoption of well-being applications and tools, the role of automation, and e-HRM (electronic HRM) maturity. My thesis also intends to address the knowledge gap in improving and strengthening workplace environment conditions, as reflected by The Swedish Workplace Environment Authority.

The thesis features HR initiatives implemented to the diverse needs of the employees through technology and what impacts employees the most in the process of application of digital means at work from the management, HR personnel, and employee perspective. This ranges from the arrangement of wellness applications, tools for organizations leveraging innovative solutions, to creating a supportive ecosystem that is recognized and also addresses individual and organization well-being. In addition, the thesis explores the impact of automation, e-HRM maturity in work-related employee well-being, and organization performance, reflecting absenteeism as an outcome variable

of well-being in the Nordic zone. Hence, some selected sub-studies will be apprehended to explore the objective of the current study.

The aim of this thesis is to unfold and mitigate the gap that disconnects between management's high-tech intentions and the employee's lived experiential trajectory through HR acting as a strategic advocate that translates data into *resource caravans* and ensures *well-being-by-design* at the workplace in a digitally prone environment. The focused studies are formulated in dialogue with the human resource function at my case organizations. My overarching research question is:

“How does the contribution of Human Resources to promoting workplace well-being manifest through the implementation of digital Human Resource Management initiatives?”

This research contends that the successful evolution of Human Resource Management in the digital era is not merely a function of technological maturity, but of the organization's ability to maintain a strong HRM signal that bridges the implementation gap between managerial intent and employee experience. By synthesizing Conservation of Resources (COR) and Social Exchange theories, this thesis demonstrates that in a post-pandemic, digitally prone environment, HR must transcend managerial myopia, and the reductive focus on digital metrics to function as a Strategic Guardian. In due course, this work argues that true DHRM Maturity is achieved only when digital interventions are designed as resource caravans that reinforce the relational psychological contract, transforming technological tools from potential sources of technostress into clear conduits of organizational care and mutual benefit.

1.3. HR strategies/initiatives

The contemporary definition of HRM *supposes* an application of strategy; and moreover, an initiative. According to Armstrong (2008), HRM is defined as a strategic and coherent approach for managing the organizations' most valuable resource - **its people** - who both individually and collectively play a vital role in achieving organizational objectives. In comparison, Strategic HRM is defined as “an approach to the development and implementation of HR strategies that are integrated with its business strategies and enable the organization to achieve its goals” (Armstrong, 2023, p.65). As reflected in Armstrong's (2023) definition of SHRM, the strategic approach in managing HRM will be implied throughout this thesis as ‘HRM’.

Embracing the strategic HRM figure from Armstrong (2008), human resource management stems from HR philosophies linking HR strategies, policies, processes, practices, and programs into five (5) broad HR areas, among which, organizations and people resourcing are the key components in this thesis. However, my papers fall under the following areas of HR initiatives: organization development and design, health and safety, employee well-being, and e-HRM. The HRM System Model displayed in *appendix 1* shows the relevancy of its inclusion in connection with the papers linking HR framework through HR strategies, initiatives, well-being, and its promotion. Table 1 provides a list of papers distributed under different areas in HRM System Model (Armstrong, 2012) with the subject topic.

Table 1: The papers distributed under different areas in the HRM model

Paper	Subject topic	Area of study in the Model
Paper 1	Well-being at the workplace	Employee well-being
Paper 2	Pulse survey	Organization development/design
Paper 3	Digital health intervention	Employee well-being/organization development/design
Paper 4	Automation & well-being	Employee well-being
Paper 5	e-HRM maturity	e-HRM and health and safety

1.4. Mechanism of intended, implemented, and experienced well-being strategies/contributions

Organizations undertake human resource practices as strategies to attract, acquire, and retain suitable employees for a longer run by providing them with the training, development, and motivation needed to reach organizational goals. Wright and Nishii (2007) were the first to conceptually differentiate between HR practices at three levels; namely ‘intended’, ‘implemented’, and ‘experienced’. While returning to strategy issues in the academic concept, Michael Porter’s (1985) seminal paper on the sources of competitive advantage, the organization requires us to choose to implement a unique HR strategy that aligns with the organization’s business strategy by enabling employees to advance a clear understanding of the behaviors that are encouraged, endorsed, and incentivized (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009). Other scholars had identified the dichotomy between ‘intended HR strategy’ and ‘realized HR intervention’ (Truss, 2001;

Truss & Gratton, 1994; Gratton, et al., 1999) and between ‘intended’ and ‘actual’ HR practices (Wright & Snell, 1998).

The conceptual notion from Bowen and Ostroff (2004) posits that a strong HRM system in an organization needs to be distinctive, consistent, and consensus-oriented, with a shared view of interpretation from employees and decision-makers as to what type of behavior is expected and rewarded. In other words, there needs to be a consistency between what type of HR practices are promised and how these practices need to be implemented (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Huselid & Becker, 1997; Khilji & Wang, 2006; Truss, 2001; Ungureanu et al, 2019). The contingency approach provides an understanding for academicians and practitioners that organizations with distinct types of business strategies require the adoption of differentiated HR practices that can be easily translated by employers to communicate and actively support their employees (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004).

In addition to the above literature, a typology of strategies at the organizational level were developed by Palthe and Ernst Kossek (2003). According to them, when organizational level strategies (employee-centered, profession-centered, task-centered, and innovation-centered) and HR level strategies (make, buy, contract, and partner) are more tightly connected to each other, the effectiveness of the message delivered to the employees increases with its level of potency (Harris & Ogbonna, 2001; Lepak & Snell, 1999, Wei & Lau, 2008). Although the aforementioned literature provides a positive view of the employers’ side, limitations still exist. One limitation is the tendency to over-prioritize the structure of HR practices, often neglecting the significance of employees' interpretations and the comprehension of employer communication (Truss, 2001; Wright & Boswell; 2002). Batat (2022) expresses a sheer concern in comprehending the experiences of employees within the organizational context and their potential impact on the

holistic well-being of individuals as they navigate their experiential trajectories within the organization.

Well-being strategies across the globe have been very prominent in different sized industries. During the devastating COVID-19 pandemic years, many organizations had to close doors full-time to contractual employees. A number of employers began different initiatives to keep their employees' spirits up to fight against the adverse situation that arose from a remote and isolated working and personal life. The promotion of well-being strategies was initiated by organizations to reduce the number of employees leaving organizations, in the form of positive reinforcement meant to motivate employees to stay at the organization. Employers created a culture of care, socialization, and citizenship behavior through implementing reward systems. However, the issue of aligning organization strategies with HR strategies differs and 'one size fits all' often falls short, due to the idiosyncratic need for employees that HR must meet in order to have a well-being-oriented culture in the workplace.

Figure 1. in the following section provides the structure of the thesis in terms of research purpose, research questions, and the associated papers.

1.5. Structure of the papers in relation to purpose of the thesis

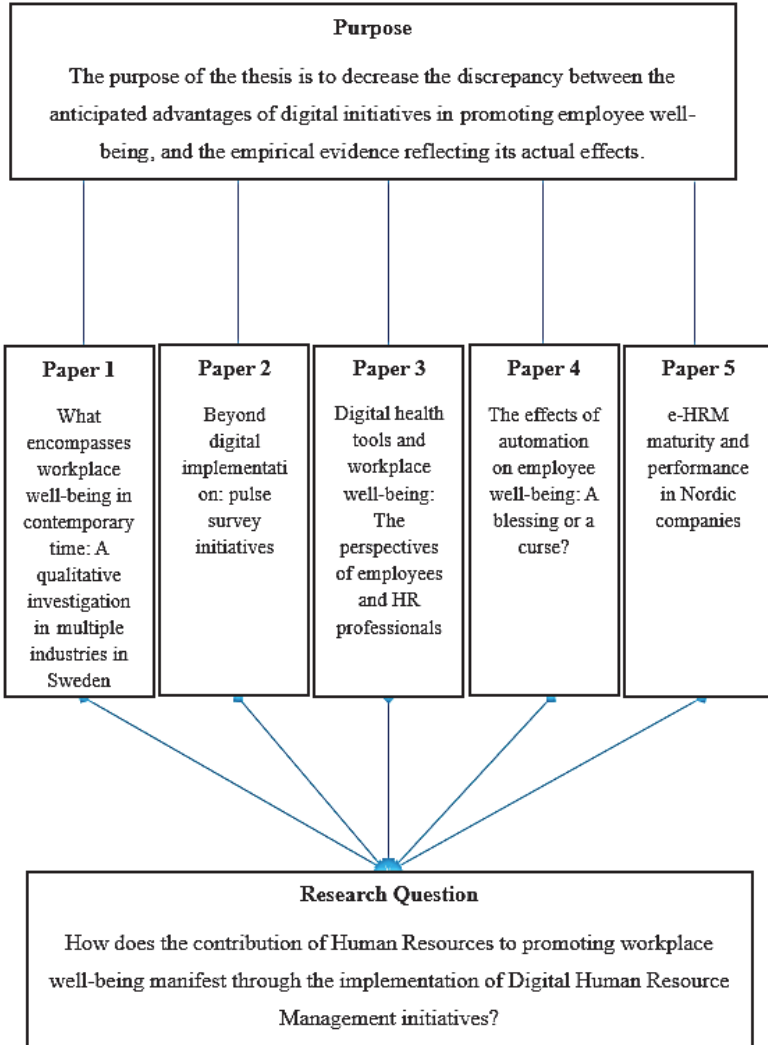


Figure 1: The structure of the thesis in terms of research purpose, research questions, and associated papers.

1.6. Authorship of papers

Table 2 provides information about authors' work contributions in the manuscripts. (Note that comments and insight on the progress of the text were

decided upon by the co-supervisor and other junior and senior researchers during the process).

Table 2. The authorship of the attempted paper and authors' contributions

Paper	First author	Other authors and affiliations	Author contributions
Paper 1	Nazneen Rony	Stefan Tengblad	Nazneen: Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, formulation of question, data collection and investigation, writing original draft preparation, discussion, review, and editing. Stefan: Data collection and investigation, review and editing.
Paper 2	Nazneen Rony	Stefan Tengblad	Nazneen: Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, formulation of question, data collection and investigation, writing original draft preparation, review, and editing. Stefan: Conceptualization, data collection and investigation, review and editing.
Paper 3	Nazneen Rony	Stefan Tengblad	Nazneen: Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, formulation of question, data collection and investigation, writing original draft preparation, review, and editing. Stefan: Conceptualization, data collection and writing-review and editing.
Paper 4	Arney Einarsson U of Bifrost, Iceland	Katrin Olafsdottir, U of Reykjavik, Iceland Nazneen Rony, U of Gothenburg Stefan Tengblad, U of Gothenburg	Arney: Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, formulation of question and hypothesis, data collection and investigation, writing-original draft preparation, review, and editing. Katrin: Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, formulation of question, hypothesis, data collection and investigation, writing-original draft preparation, discussion, review, and editing. Nazneen: Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, formulation of hypothesis, investigation, writing-original draft preparation, discussion, review, and editing. Stefan: Conceptualization, investigation, securing data access, writing- discussion, review and editing.
Paper 5	Nazneen Rony	M. Shahin Sarwar, U of Gothenburg Lotta Dellve, U of Gothenburg Stefan Tengblad, U of Gothenburg	Nazneen: Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, formulation of hypothesis, investigation, writing- original draft preparation, discussion, review, and editing. Shahin: Methodology, formal analysis, formulation of hypothesis, investigation, review, and editing. Lotta: Analysis, investigation, discussion, review, and editing Stefan: Investigation, data authority and review.

1.7. Outline of the thesis

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter provides the background, research problematization, motivation behind, and introduction to the research topic. The chapter also provides an overview of the research purpose, question, and the outline of the thesis.

Chapter 2 Methodology

This chapter covers the methodology part of the thesis. It provides a brief understanding of ontological and epistemological stances for the appended papers, a description of the research design, a research approach, data collection, and analysis.

Chapter 3 Frame of reference

The main concepts and topics examined in this thesis are covered in this chapter. The concept of well-being, strategic mechanisms (intended, implemented, and perceived), maturity of e-HRM in Nordic context, and digital well-being initiatives adopted in different organizations are all explored here. The chapter summarizes the importance of well-being-oriented HRM in the current contemporary digital environment for organizations, as proposed by researchers. Lastly, a number of theoretical underpinnings are summarized.

Chapter 4 Findings/Results

This chapter highlights the summaries of the appended papers with a strong focus on the scope of findings reported in each of the papers.

Chapter 5 Discussions

The chapter enlightens the research questions from the appended papers to condense them into one overarching research question by applying the

scholarly theories with a rationale behind why a significant implementation gap persists, despite increasing technological maturity.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The closing chapter ends with practical implications, limitations, and future directions to enhance the promotion of employee well-being in the digital world.

2. Methodology

The chapter demonstrates the methodology of the thesis, which is essential for assessing the validity of the findings. It includes an ontological and epistemological position of the thesis and a description of how the methodological approaches of the paper are reasonable and contribute to the conclusions of the thesis.

2.1. Ontological, epistemological, and personal positioning

In social science research, the methodological implications stem from grounding ontological and epistemological perspectives. The involvement of researchers and the standpoint in theoretical frameworks, sampling, data collection, and synthesizing and analyzing data are common attributes of a salient research design (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). This section provides a brief description of the standpoints behind underpinning the thesis.

2.1.1. The philosophical view and understanding of research design

The philosophical view of the thesis briefly deliberates the ontological critical realism, epistemological interpretivism, positivism, and the pragmatism in the following paragraphs.

Ontology refers to the study of what exists: the nature of reality or being. In social science, ontology is concerned with the assumptions researchers make about the nature of social life (Blaikie, 2007). Different ontological viewpoints can reflect different viewpoints based on various beliefs about how social phenomena should be examined and understood. One of these viewpoints is critical realism, a combination of realism and constructivism. This approach recognizes both the existence of real structures and the subjective interpretation of these structures. In other words, critical realism

contrasts the gap between realism and constructivism by acknowledging that social phenomena have an objective reality; our understanding of them is always mediated by social and cultural contexts. For instance, the paper on what is well-being and what comprises well-being at workplace, could constitute critical realism, as well-being at the workplace could differ according to individual perceptions and requirements based on their needs.

Epistemology in social science encompasses nature and scope of knowledge, specifically how knowledge about the social world can be obtained. In connection to my paper on pulse surveys, interpretivist epistemological positioning seemed beneficial, as the study consists of case study analysis (Bryman, 2016). We conducted inductive interviews to gain insights into the effectiveness and experiences of the interviewees. The papers on automation maturity, work-related well-being, and organization performance emphasize epistemological positivism due to the assumption that reality is objective and can be understood by an independent observer.

However:

My study adopts a **pragmatic stand**, where it bridges the traditional division between positivist and interpretivist epistemologies (Creswell, 2003). In other words, pragmatism holds *two extremes*, valuing both quantitative insights and qualitative understanding and offers a flexible and pluralistic approach inquiry. Pragmatism claims to reconcile the partition between the scientific methodology and structuralist perspective characteristic of earlier approaches, and the naturalistic techniques alongside the more flexible orientation found in contemporary approaches (Creswell, 2003). The current study moves forward with a wishful thought of pragmatism as the usefulness of the objective measure is equally important as the importance of the contexts and of multiple perspectives. Since my research objective is explicitly based on problems centered and outcomes oriented in current real-

life situations, priority is given to research questions that need to be answered and their practical implications, over loyalty to any single philosophical system, which is insufficient and limited (Morgan, 2007). Therefore, embracing a pragmatic approach would be advantageous, as it would enhance my research by integrating both objectivity and a comprehensive understanding of phenomena related to human resources, digital tools, and well-being. For instance, take the case of the paper, where e-HRM maturity in the Nordic countries emphasized the maturity of level of e-HRM used by the organizations in particular, to examine whether there was any impact on the performance of the organization or of absenteeism at work.

2.1.2. Involvement of the researcher

Researchers in social science studies often get involved in the phenomenon that are being studied (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2018). For example, while conducting online Microsoft teams interviews, I expressed my interest in knowing about the terminology surrounding the construct of *well-being* and what that means from the interviewees' point of view. Secondly, I wanted to know whether employees have experienced any well-being-related benefits, services, and support from the organization and whether they also perceived of any of those services digitally? The opportunities to learn more about ongoing well-being initiatives engaging through various digital, wearable well-being tools and applications by different stakeholders and also by the interviewees in general were the major objective for me to become more actively engaged. An extra precaution was taken to avoid asking leading questions of the interviewees and to maintain transparency in posing relevant research questions and interests. Furthermore, the other involved researchers and I were diligent in creating an environment that encouraged respondents to express their thoughts and ideas openly.

2.1.3. Standpoints regarding design, sampling, and analyzed samples

Since the thesis is a combination of epistemological positivism and interpretivism, the sample size differed in different papers embedded into this dissertation. The sample size in a social constructivism paradigm is usually smaller than in the positivistic studies (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). The unit of analysis serves as the foundational element for any sample utilized in a research study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). For example, socially constructed studies like case studies often have individuals, and a specific event or another phenomenon can be unit of analysis. However, there could be confusion between the unit of analysis and the unit of data collection. If an organization is studied, the unit of analysis would be the people working in that organization. While the unit of data collection would be the respondents or interviewees involved in the study (Yin, 2018).

Paper 1 is an interview study which consists of identifying workplace attributes that employees would often refer to the organization as constituting a decent and healthy workplace environment. The unit of analysis is the respondents who interviewed and represented the organizations. In paper 2, which was a multiple context case study consisting of units from two public municipalities administering pulse surveys for employee engagement who were interested in well-being-related questions. The units of analysis were employees from different ranks and functional positions, including the cases. Paper 3 consists of HR interventions in the form of digital well-being tools identifying discrepancies in the success or failure of health tools. This is a case study in which organizations adopt the same tool for their employees to measure their micro habits to improve organizational performance. The unit of analysis for this study is the organization, and the unit of data collection are the employees/respondents representing the organizations.

In paper 4, a quantitative research technique was applied to explore the effect of automation on employee well-being in Icelandic organizations. The unit of analysis were the organizations involved in automation processes and the units of data collection were HR managers, and employees involved in payroll, and cross-industry tax authority services. In paper 5, quantitative data analysis is adopted to find a comparative panel study on adoption e-HRM maturity and its links toward organizational performance and employee absenteeism. The unit of analysis was an organization involved in responding to HR automation in the Nordic region and the unit of data collection was the head of the HR department of the participating organizations.

2.2. Research design, approach, data collection, and data analysis methods

The purpose of the study determined the research design and research approach of this thesis. Interviews, case studies, and survey studies were chosen as the research approaches. The choice of approaches, followed by the description of data collection and data analysis techniques applied in the thesis, are presented in this section; first in Table 3 and thereafter in the following text.

Table 3 Overview of design, sampling, and study groups of paper I-V

	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4	Paper 5
Design Approach	Qualitative Grounded theory	Qualitative Case-study (2 municipalities) Grounded theory	Qualitative Case-study (5 companies) Grounded theory	Quantitative Case-study (1. Iceland, 2. Interested companies in Iceland)	Quantitative Case-study (Nordic countries: (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden)
Sampling	Purposive Information and access through HR	Purposive (strategic, theoretical) Information and access through HR	Purposive Information and access through HR	1. All HR-managers in Iceland Employees in participating organizations	All responding HR in Nordic countries
Data-collection (year)	Interviews (2023-2025)	Interviews (2022-2023)	Semi-structured interviews in two phases (2023-2024)	Cranet survey (2018)	Cranet survey (2021)
Study sample	19 interviewees	17 interviewees	20 interviews with 11 interviewees	1. 125 respondents (n=34%) 32 organisations, 898 employees (n=47%)	711 respondents (n=x%)
Analysis	Open and focused coding in line with grounded theory Theoretical memo-writing	Open and focused coding in line with grounded theory Theoretical memo-writing	Open and focused coding in line with grounded theory Theoretical memo-writing	Variables: Automation maturity, burnout, satisfaction, trust Descriptives and analytic statistics (correlations, two-level mixed effect ordered logit regression)	Variables: Limited Level Maturity e-HRM, Extensive Maturity E-HRM, Organizational Performance. Descriptives and analytic statistics (regression models)

2.2.1. Qualitative study approaches

2.2.1.1. Case study approach

For some of our papers, we applied a case study approach to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter in selected organizational contexts. A case study approach aids social science researchers in better understanding a given phenomenon from different perspectives. According to Robert Stake (1995) and Robert Yin (2003), the purpose of a case study approach is to ensure the interesting topic is well-explored and that the essence of the phenomenon is revealed. As stressed by both the researchers focusing on constructivism, one of the advantages of a case study is that it fosters a close collaboration between the researcher and the participant (Baxter & Jack, 2008), which is essential for the purpose of this study—to know the perception of the participants and lead them the way they would rely on the researcher to feel safe to talk about the phenomenon in a story-telling way (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). On the premises of the construction of reality theory, with stories, participants are able to describe their views of reality and empower the researcher to understand the participant's actions in a better way (Robottom & Hart, 1993). In adopting the case studies approach, it would be beneficial for the organization to know the specific empirical information they can receive in order to find a comparison with other organizations and reduce their gap through deciding to implement the right kind of strategies. On the other hand, the researcher is able to delve more deeply into the organization, identifying and finding out the implications of phenomenon and providing corrective actions for organizations to adopt wherever necessary in the organization cycle. In this compilation thesis, a case study approach was specifically chosen (for papers 1, 2 and 3) to examine the ways in which social experiences are created in everyday small changes in habits and adopted activities (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

2.2.1.2. *Grounded theory*

The theoretical root of grounded theory (GT) was developed at the Chicago School of Sociology, in the 1950s. The aim of GT is to generate theoretical frameworks, themes, and concepts which explain the collected data. GT is essentially inductive and considered part of interpretative tradition. Throughout the research process, analytical interpretations of data direct the focus of further data collection. This new data refines the emerging themes and categories. Glaser (1992) explains that categories and their properties emerge when comparing data with data, and categories with categories (constant comparative approach). The method has been developed via different paths; e.g., constructivist grounded theory, which aims at gaining an interpretative understanding of subjects' meanings (constructs) of their reality (the image of *a* reality). Thus, the 'discovered' reality is a product, or construction, of interactions between the researcher and the data (Charmaz, 2006).

There are some fundamental strategies for a GT study; e.g., data collection and analysis phases of research proceed simultaneously, analysis is shaped from the data rather than from preconceived theoretical frameworks, stepwise sampling through strategic and later theoretical lenses, and analysis must include a constant comparison of raw data and emerging themes/categories and theoretical memo-writing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). In this thesis, elements of GT were used in the qualitative studies (paper 1, 4 and 5) and specifically regarding sampling, the coding process, and memo-writing.

The sampling was strategic and purposive, meant to sharpen the particular focus and interest of the study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Robinson & Kerr, 2015) and to highlight the variation in the experiences in focus (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Here, we collaborated carefully (in ethical aspects) with

people within the selected cases (HR professionals, communicator), to guide the selection of informants. We also used theoretical sampling to refine, elaborate, and exhaust conceptual understandings of emerging themes during the analysis.

The concrete steps for the coding process in GT were found to be valuable. The different traditions in grounded theory label the stepwise coding process differently. The interview transcripts were coded as they were collected step-by-step, and later re-coded on a more conceptual level. The open coding aimed to label and form the first conceptualization of data. The interview transcripts were read through several times. Then the transcription was read part by part, the data were questioned (e.g., “What is expressed here?” and “What does this mean?”) and codes representing the perceptions and meaning in the data were labelled. As the coding proceeded, codes were constantly compared with other codes. This constant comparison was intended to unveil similarities and differences. Codes with the same content were given the same labels. Then, codes with similar content were clustered into more conceptual themes. The last step in the coding process (focused coding) was more conceptual and intended to integrate and refine the themes and sub-themes.

To gain an overview of the analysis, theoretical memos (ideas, reflections, and preliminary assumptions) about connections and conceptual relationships in the data were written down during the analysis process to develop theoretical sensitivity. This theoretical memo-writing was important for the process between coding and completed analysis.

2.2.1.3. Interviews

Qualitative interviews were used in three papers. As a social researcher, through qualitative interviews, it is possible to encounter varieties of human experience (Kvale, 2006). This is especially useful in the attempt to

understand a phenomenon from the interviewee's point of view and unveil its meaning to their lived world. As such, through dialogue interview, interviewees can talk freely and share experiences of their life situations in their own words and offer a voice for all common people (Kvale, 2006).

Some previous studies mention that the interview session is a bridge of knowledge between the researcher and the research subject (Pullen & Simpson, 2009). The concept of well-being, and approaches to increasing well-being at work, may be a sensitive issue to discuss with employees. Conducting in-depth interviews is a viable opportunity for researchers to discuss and dig more into the issue and related conditions. Having an open conversation may help employees share experiences. Often due to close interactions between the researcher and the interviewees, they seem to open-up and share their point of view with emancipation and enthusiasm (Kvale, 2006). However, sometimes, it is necessary to observe and listen to the subject (interviewee) without interruptions to understand the traits of the subject. Based on these traits, researchers can decide when, what, and how to react to the situation. Meanwhile, it is mandatory to observe the interviewee's gestures, expressions, and ways of explanation, as sometimes they do not intend to speak the truth while their physical expressions are questionable. Although the interview dialogue provides an illusion of mutual interest in the conversation it is a misnomer, as it actually takes place for the purpose of the interviewer (the researcher's interest) (Kvale, 2006).

The interviews were conducted according to the convenience of the respondent's availability in person and digitally. The duration of the interview ranged from 35 to 60 minutes. We recorded the interviews, and I transcribed them word-for-word. I also kept a notebook to record important key notes and even observations on interviewees' gestures and posture whenever required.

2.2.2. Quantitative approach

2.2.2.1. Surveys

In studies 4 and 5, a survey from the Cranet Database (2018 and 2021) was used (see Parry et al., 2021). Cranet is an international network of HRM researchers, coordinated by Pennsylvania State University on human resource policies and practices. The network distributed a questionnaire about HRM every fourth year to organizations in 38 countries (in 2020/2021 dataset). Since we are focusing on the Nordic region, we applied for and achieved permission to use the data from the respective Cranet investigator responsible in each country. The questionnaire consists of six parts, and we used questions and items that are of relevance to our research topic. Thus, we included items that had clues on e-HRM, and an organization's size, industry, performance indicators, and percentage of absenteeism.

The following variables were analyzed:

Automation maturity was assessed with the scenario item: "At what stage is the organization in terms of automation of processes regarding technology and in terms of its impact on jobs in the organization?" Each option presented progressing stages, ranging from 1 to 5: (1) "We are at square one and have not started formal work on automation of processes"; (2) "We have started initial inspection of what process may be automated"; (3) "We have automated certain specific processes that have started to affect some jobs"; (4) "We have started automation of processes in production/services in a few divisions, and it is already affecting jobs"; (5) "We are well advanced into automation in most areas/divisions of the organization, and it is affecting many jobs".

Job burnout/ emotional exhaustion was assessed by the 5-item instrument Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-General survey, Maslach & Jackson,

1996). The questions were: "I feel emotionally drained because of my work", "I feel exhausted at the end of the working day", "I get tired in the morning from the thought of having to go to work again, one day", "I experience it as a significant strain to work all day" and "I feel burnt out by my work". The Alpha reliability for the construct was calculated (Cronbach Alpha = 0.88).

Job satisfaction was measured with four statements from Judge et al. (2002). Examples of statements are: "Most days I am excited about my job" and "I get a lot of satisfaction from my job" (Cronbach Alpha = 0.87). *General trust in organizations* was assessed with four items from Huff and Kelley (2003) and two items from Robinson (1996). Example of items are "There is a very high level of trust throughout this organization" and "I can expect my employer to treat me in a consistent and predictable fashion" (Cronbach Alpha = 0.88).

Limited level Maturity e-HRM activities (LLM) included the involvement of manager self-service, employee self-service, and HR shared services, but no involvement with HR information systems, algorithm-based HR processes, or HR analytics. BLM scores were created by summed values of e-HRM activities (range 0 to 9).

Extensive Maturity E-HRM activities (ELM) The involvement of the above-described BLM and at least one of the following e-HRM activities: HR information systems, algorithm-based HR processes, and HR analytics. An MLM score was created by summed values of e-HRM activities (range 0 to 18).

Organizational performance is based on service quality, level of productivity, profitability, rate of innovation, and environmental matters. Summed range with value from 1 to 5.

Background variables were also analyzed. At the organizational level, we considered the sector where the organization operates, i.e., public services, services, and manufacturing (dummy variables), and an organization's size (number of employees). At the employee level, control variables included gender, age, seniority, education (dummy variables), weekly work hours, and occupation (managerial level, professional, manual work).

2.2.2.2. *Quantitative analysis*

First, we investigated the quality of the dataset and made the decided categorizations and scores. Internal consistency and construct validity of scores were assessed with Cronbach alpha. Afterwards, we calculated the descriptive statistics (m, Md, SD, %).

In paper 4, we started with Pearson correlations between key variables to estimate the relationship between the dependent variables at the employee level: job burnout, job satisfaction and trust and the two independent variables of automation maturity. Thereafter, two-level mixed effects ordered logit regression was used: the first level being the organization level and the second the employee level. In the regressions, the three levels of automation were represented by two dummy variables—medium automation and high automation—with no automation being the left-out variable.

In paper 5, after descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations were conducted between key variables and regressions were run to estimate the relationship between the dependent variables. Fixed effects on country-wise regression were applied, and we categorized the sample into three different panels: Panel A consists of all samples; Panel B of Sweden, and Panel C of the four other countries, except Sweden. Lastly, we examined the variables of size, industry, and sector of the organizations to determine the level of use and

representation of e-HRM systems in the Nordic region and compared this with Sweden in particular.

Statistical data analysis was carried out using Stata, STATA SE. In all estimations, 95% confidence intervals (95% CI) were used.

2.3. Ethics Statement (A Good Research Practice)

Throughout the entire process of conducting this research, I have prioritized the ethical handling of data as a matter of both professional responsibility and respect. The approach is rooted in the 'Good Research Practice' framework, which serves as a detailed roadmap for addressing potential ethical issues. These principles, specifically honesty, transparency, and the safeguarding of participant privacy form the ethical foundation of Swedish research (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). This section outlines how these core values were translated into practical safeguards to protect the integrity of those who contributed their experiences to this project. The research focus remained exclusively on the participants' professional experiences, with specific digital tools, evaluating their functionality, perceived utility, and integration into existing workflows, rather than on personal biographical data. The subsequent texts detail the stepwise procedure used to gather data through direct interactions with participants.

2.3.1. Regulatory Compliance

The design and execution of this study were guided by the Swedish Ethical Review Act (SFS 2003:460), with the recent procedural guidelines from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Etikprövningsmyndigheten, 2023; 2024). We conducted a self-assessment to determine the necessity of a formal review. As the study's scope was limited to the evaluation of organizational tools and professional experiences, deliberately avoiding the collection of data which

precluded the collection of ‘*special categories of personal data*’ as defined by Article 9(1) of the GDPR (e.g., health status, ethnicity, religious beliefs, political views, or trade union affiliation) (EU, 2016; SFS 2018:218; Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). The research did not meet the threshold for mandatory review. Instead, we focused on robust internal ethical safeguards, such as anonymization and independent recruitment, to ensure participant protection.

2.3.2. Participant Autonomy and Informed Consent

A core priority of this research was the protection of participant agencies. All contributors were invited to participate on a strictly voluntary basis. Prior to any data collection, participants were provided with a comprehensive information sheet detailing the study’s aims, the nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any point without providing a reason or facing any professional repercussions. Informed consent was secured through both a formal written template and a verbal confirmation at the start of each session.

2.3.3. Confidentiality and Power Dynamics

Given the workplace setting, we remained deeply mindful of the inherent power asymmetries between employees and management. To address this, recruitment was handled entirely by the researcher, independent of organizational leadership. This partitioning ensured that employers remained unaware of who chose to participate and prevented any sense of coercion.

To safeguard privacy, the following measures were implemented:

- ✓ Anonymization: All identifying markers (names, specific department titles, and locations) were removed during transcription.

- ✓ Pseudonyms: Participants were assigned unique identifiers to ensure that their contributions could be discussed in the findings without compromising their identity.
- ✓ Secure Storage: All raw data and consent forms were stored in encrypted folders, accessible only to the researcher.

3. Frame of reference

3.1. Brief overview of HRM implementation literature

Research in the past decade has shown that HRM intention and practices are considerably idiosyncratic in nature (Andreeva et al., 2023). However, the discrepancies between these two are important determinants when highlighting individual and organizational performance (Khilji & Wang, 2006). Building upon this reasoning, Nishii and Wright (2007) differentiated between three distinct aspects of HRM; namely, intended HR practice policies designed by the top management, actual HR practices implemented by HR mid-level or line managers, and perceived HR practices experienced by the employees. An awareness of the inconsistencies among these has redirected attention to the perceived human resource practices as significant determinants of employee outcomes (Beijer et al, 2019; Nishii & Wright, 2007). For instance, van Rossenberg (2021) and Wang et al. (2020) researched the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ of HR perceptions by employees.

The research mentioned above is mostly based on the assumption that the gaps between intended, implemented, and perceived programs are harmful to both employees and organization performance and should be decreased (Wright & Nishii, 2007). A few empirical studies have shed light on the gaps and investigated how they emerge and have impacted individual-level outcomes (Khilji & Wang, 2006). Alvesson and Kärreman (2007) found that employees had positive interpretations of the HRM system, despite the existed gap between the intended and the implemented HR practices. Although limited empirical evidence is inconclusive, Trullen et al. (2020) posits that identifying the difference between actual and intended HR practices may not certainly be a sign of ineffective implementation, as the practices might be changed to a different organizational setting with the intention of finding a better fit. In summary, more empirical research is

required from a diverse range of organizational settings to support the assumption of intended, implemented, and perceived view of HR practices that are always dysfunctional and that can eventually be reduced.

3.2. Importance of Maturity and DHRM focusing on well-being

Not a single day that passes by without knowing that Artificial intelligence entangles our lives. For instance, an AI-generated robot welcomes us in the renowned car-producing company (e.g., Volvo Trucks HO). However, this digital transformation is visible in most parts of industries where human resource management has a prevailing update of the innovative changes in their different human resource functions and practices. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the pace of this digitalization of HR processes (Zavyalova et al., 2022). Organizations that managed to take the advantage of this digital transformation were in a better position than the ones those paid less attention to digitalization (Zavyalova et al., 2022). Digital transformation in human resource management refers to the changes taking place through integrating the digital tools, technologies, and processes from traditional human resources practices to data-driven processes; as human resource functions in decision-making to manage workforces more effectively thus meeting the strategic goal of the organization. To manage employee well-being, the adoption of employee weekly engagement survey and feedback, and health interventions using nudging concepts have been noticeable in organizations in Sweden and other western countries. Digital health interventions, encompassing wellness applications, wearable monitoring devices, and AI-based mental health chatbots, and virtual therapy platforms, provide scalable and data-driven support aimed at stress mitigation, mindfulness enhancement, the promotion of physical activity, and the improvement of work–life balance (Mikava & Baramidze, 2024).

However, Strohmeier (2020) calls for an inquiry into DHRM strategies and whether the interaction of DHRM with overall digital organization has any strategic integration. The query also posits that the managerial and technical interrelations between kinds of digitalization are important to investigate to understand whether the real types of DHRM exist, and their respective contexts and consequences. Contextual aspects constitute the internal–external forces that contribute to the emergence of real types of DHRM, and consequences determine the concrete changes that are associated with the identified real types of digitalization in an organization. Strohmeier (2020) proposes clarity on the typology of digital human resource management (HRM), outlining its evolution from traditional analogue HRM to DHRM. This progression is characterized by a transition from operational activities to strategic alignment, culminating in the strategic integration of HRM with overarching organizational objectives.

3.3. Digital Health Tools management—an initiative/strategy by HR

Digital health tools application and management are nowadays commonly seen in the workplaces of different sized organizations. This solution has boomed, especially after the sudden shutdown of the connections between the whole world due to COVID-19 (pls. see, SHRM, 2024). Organizations became more conscious about the overall well-being of their people to avoid such uncertainty in the sustainability of their business cycle. However, managing, and continuously upgrading through customized delivery of services could be beneficial for users. Digital health tools possess the capacity to reconcile the discrepancies among intended, implemented, and experienced human resource activities by offering real-time data and feedback systems. Nevertheless, if these tools lack user-friendliness or do not integrate smoothly into the daily routines of employees, they may

inadvertently widen the existing gap. Theres and Strohmeier (2024) emphasize prioritizing user experience (UX) to ensure adoption and objective attainment. They argue over the usability of the tool, whether the tool is frustrating, or whether the signal is static. However, the challenges remain submerged when ‘one size fits for all’ fails to work, especially in a diversified workforce in terms of age, gender, technological literacy, and health requirements.

3.4. Well-being-Oriented HRM

The concept ‘well-being-oriented HRM’ branches from Guest (2017), who identified a bundle of five HR practices that were designed to promote employee well-being (i.e., that prioritize and support health and safety). Well-being-oriented HRM is a unique approach in comparison to the performance-oriented HRM approach that has been already covered by many researchers. Guest (2017) posits that investing in employees (training and career support), offering engaging work (autonomy, work variety, feedback), a positive physical and social environment (prioritizing employee safety, avoiding discrimination), ensuring voice (through collective agents, grievance procedures), and providing organizational support (flexible work arrangements) are antecedents of employee-centric well-being.

In line with these and other scientifically established conditions and management strategies, a theoretical framework of implementing health-promoting leadership at different levels (executive, supervisor, middle managers, top manager) and strategies that addresses employee well-being were suggested by Dellve & Eriksson (2017). Their framework includes institutional and managerial work perspectives (Tengblad, 2012) at various levels. However, the development and evaluation of such complex

interventions—which involve several interacting factors—requires more than just an analysis of the significance of the intervention. Above all, knowledge is needed about how it is carried out (implementation), core components, the context in which it is carried out, its perceived usefulness, and its compliance with the needs of those affected (Skivington, et al 2021).

HR manager's (strategic) role through applying different HR practices and also helping organizations to achieve a healthy work culture environment may strengthen the impact of the development of health-oriented leadership at all levels (Akerjordet, et al., 2018). Besides analyzing HR strategies as one key of the core components in regard to supporting alignment with policies, and strengthening practices and views of organizational culture, this thesis will contribute to the literature by integrating a comprehensive set of well-being indicators as they acknowledge the multidimensional nature of employee well-being and the likelihood of probable trade-offs among them (Guerci, et al., 2022).

3.5. Theoretical Underpinnings

3.5.1. HRM System Strength Theory

The Mechanism of Digital HR Initiatives/Intervention to improve well-being that might have potential but are not realized can be an important concept. Based on the claim by Bowen and Ostroff (2004) in their scholarly paper about HRM system strength, we suggest that the use of HR interventions as HR initiatives for employees and organization as a whole can be explained. That is, we can explain how the practices are delivered so that the effectiveness of the HR intervention/initiatives can be enhanced through the lens of the intended policy formulated by the senior level management, how these initiatives were adopted and delivered by the mid-level or line

managers, *per se*, to the employees and how employees perceived those practices. Bowen and Ostroff (2004) illustrates how HRM can convey clear and unambiguous messages to employees by facilitating a collective understanding of the contextual circumstances. They emphasized the importance of attributes of an HRM system strength process that enables employees to accurately interpret and react to the information presented in the HR practices (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004).

Nine meta-features of HRM systems are elucidated that build distinctiveness, consistency, and consensus and can be conceptualized in terms of effectiveness in delivering the types of information needed to create a strong situation. Organizations often lack in delivering customized well-being tools for individuals working at organizations. This is due to how employees interpret and make sense of the HR practices (Ostroff, 2021; p.162) initiated as tools. The three attributes of HRM system are explained below in light of digital HR initiatives. For the purpose of mutual understanding, HR digital health interventions, well-being tools, and applications are interchangeably used here in the following sections.

1. Distinctiveness

When offering a service to employees and to the organization, HR requires to manage to focus on the distinctiveness of the situation, especially in terms of the visibility, understandability, legitimacy of authority, and relevance of the provided services. Offering wellness benefit as product or services, ‘visibility’ refers to the degree to which services are salient and readily observable to employees. As such, if the attributes and the importance of the services are not visible, then uniform expectancies regarding the accurate response patterns would be hampered. Employees are required to realize the features and commonalities of the tools to act accordingly. The understandability of the services provided is therefore important to be

distinctive for a strong HRM system. Knowing who is administering the digital well-being intervention is equally as an important feature to demonstrate where and to whom to communicate when receiving the services. The concept of authority refers to the willingness of individuals to comply with the requirements of collaborative systems (Barnard, 1938).

Decisions coming from the top-down, when the top-level managers provide support for such digital tools to be implemented into the organization, as employees tend to trust HR as a legitimate authority. The relevance of an HRM system refers to whether the situation, in this case, the well-being intervention/tools/applications—are relevant for employees to feel motivated in the workplace. According to Kelman and Hamilton (1989), this is termed ‘motivational significance’. Bowen and Ostroff (2004) suggest that the situation must be defined in such a way that employees are willing to work towards their goals, also allowing them to meet organizational goals. In other words, when implementing a digital health intervention, it is crucial to communicate to employees the degree of user-friendliness of the technology and the potential benefits it offers for enhancing their well-being. Stemming from the attribution perspective, Nishii et al (2008) emphasizes employees’ interpretation of why the HR practices are in place and how they impact their attitude and behavior. Similarly, employees find motivation in adopting the interventions for its uses and benefits when understanding how it impacts employees’ work-related well-being.

2. Consistency

Bowen and Ostroff (2004) illustrate that the HR signals need to be clear and stable regardless of time and across various HR practices that were adopted from Kelley’s (1967) consistency concept. Along with the distinctive feature of the HRM system, it draws attention to the message and its communicator to deliver the appropriate information or services by enhancing the likelihood

that the HRM communication will be consistently encoded and understood by employees (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). In order for employees to accurately discern the behaviors that are anticipated and rewarded in the context of human resources well-being interventions, it is essential that they receive appropriate training and guidance. A consistent pattern of instrumentalities across HRM practices and employees that link the specific events and effects defining the social context for (employees') specific desired behaviors. Instrumentality refers to establishing a clear message to perceive a cause-effect relationship between what HRM system's desired content-focused behaviors and what outcomes the employees receive (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). It guarantees that sufficient incentives are aligned with the performance of the targeted behavioral patterns.

When implementing an intervention, HR must ensure the cause and effect of the intervention. This means what the intervention is delivering needs to have a consequence for the behavior of their employee. Considering pulse surveys, when established, employees were diligently responding to the survey and received feedback from line managers or HR managers that consequently showed improvement in their workplace engagement. The validity of an intervention shows the consistency between what employees are purported to do and what they are actually doing to create a strong situation (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). When an application of such digital health interventions is available in the organization, the validity is measured through the consequences of the performance of the intervention. This can be possible only when employees view the communication as authoritative when they are able to comply with such tools/applications (Barnard, 1938) mentally and physically.

3. *Consensus*

Consensus and consistency are interrelated concepts; consensus refers to an agreement between employees (sender and receiver) who are directly involved in the HRM system regarding their perception of the relationship between events and their effects. In a Strategic HRM perspective, a prime decision-maker (senior management) intends to set strategic goals and design HRM practices for attaining those goals. Research indicates that when individuals perceive that the communicators are in strong agreement regarding the message, they are more inclined to reach a consensus (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). On a similar standing point about the health intervention, when the strategic goal of the organization is aligned with employees' well-being management, the employees form a consensus on the senior management's belief.

A strong HRM system mechanism builds a shared and collective attitude, perception, and behavior among employees (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) to achieve common goals of an organization that can work as a competitive advantage for organizations. Appendix 2 provides a list of a number of well-being initiatives proposed by several scholars in the last two decades.

3.5.2. *Conservation of Resource Theory (COR)*

Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resource theory highlights people enhancing and protecting their inner self by acquiring and maintaining the resources. It focuses on both psychological and physical resources (Allen et al., 2016). The individuals become happy when the external factors provide resources, while it becomes a stressor to them if there is a threat to those resources posed by the external resources. The theory signifies the stability of personal and work-related characteristics yet underscores that resources are exhausted and restocked on a constant and dynamic basis. Halbesleben et al., (2014) applied

Hobfoll's (1989) definition of resources as objects, conditions, states, and other matters that are valued by individuals, and are varied based on individuals' subjective experiences and situations.

Halbesleben, et al. (2014, p.6) defines these resources as anything that are perceived by individuals as encouraging them in achieving their goals. These resources can be tacit or objective and they can be inherent within the individual's personal characteristics which may enable them to cope with job demands and perform accordingly as well as enhance their well-being. Such resources include self-efficacy, competence, and self-esteem (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). At the group level, the social context at workplace is observed as shared relationship (i.e., communication) where the interaction and exchange of quality information are fostered and the resources are identified as social support and interpersonal relationships (Nielsen, et al., 2017). Such relationships between teamwork and performance are explored and found to be connected to previous work done by Maynard et al. (2013). However, Hobfoll and Lilly (1993) stressed that the value of the resources can be evaluated into three kinds: basic resources (primary) (e.g., health), secondary resources (social support), and tertiary resources (e.g., accomplishment). A resource caravan refers to the tendency of resources that cluster together to travel and do not remain in isolation as they are highly correlated and nested to individuals and teams and are carried across the lifespan (Hobfoll, 2001). For instance, a positive correlation between social support (external) and the development of an individual's self-efficacy (internal) (Holmgren et al., 2017).

The two major constructs in COR theory are resource gain and loss spirals that clarify complex, non-linear, and accelerating patterns observed in psychological well-being and resource decay (Hobfoll, 2001). A gain spiral is a slowly upward-moving trend found when individuals possess a cluster of

resources (e.g., social support, coworkership, autonomy) and are better equipped to utilize these resources to obtain additional ones. A loss spiral refers to a rapidly accelerating downward trend characterized by a snowball effect, wherein the depletion of resources becomes increasingly difficult to halt once initiated. The accumulation (gain) of resources generally requires a significantly longer duration compared to the swift pace at which they can be depleted (Hobfoll, 2001).

Moreover, positive emotion broadens one's individual awareness, enhances cognitive dissonance, and encourages novel thoughts (Fredrickson, 1998). People experiencing such emotions have a broader set of ideas and behavioral options, as they enable flexible and creative thinking to contribute to building up physical, intellectual, and social resources. These mechanisms build positive resources within individuals which may have a long-term impact on increase in well-being, employee engagement, improved self-efficacy, and reduce adversity.

3.5.3. *Social Exchange Theory (SET)*

Peter Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory (SET) conceptualizes social interactions as reciprocal exchanges in which individuals assess the potential rewards, such as recognition, approval, status, and services, against the associated costs, including effort and sacrifice, with the objective of maximizing personal benefits. At the core of this theory lies the principle of reciprocity, which involves the anticipation of reciprocating favors, thereby promoting trust and mutual dependence among the involved parties. This dynamic extends beyond small group interactions to encompass broader societal structures, framing relationships as evolving systems characterized by ongoing processes of mutual exchange. SET advocates that when individuals engage themselves in a series of interactions, the feelings of trust and a sense of obligation emerge, and concurrently, they are motivated to

reciprocate the behaviors (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). Accordingly, employees will return what they conceive, perceive, and receive from their managers and organizations.

4. Findings/Results

This chapter begins with summaries of the appended papers with a strong focus on the scope of findings reported in each of the papers. Further in the chapter, the analyses of the papers are connected to justify the overarching research for the thesis.

4.1. Abstract of the appended papers

Paper 1

Purpose: This study investigates **the shifting nature of employee well-being** within the volatile post-pandemic business environment, moving from a peripheral concern to a central strategic imperative.

Methodology: Utilizing a grounded theory approach, the research conducted interviews across various organizational scales to capture the evolving socio-emotional dynamics of the workforce.

Findings: The study identifies two dominant meta-themes—*coworkership* and *workplace care*—that define the modern employment relationship and a contemporary workplace attribute. Drawing from Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, the results suggest that well-being is a product of reciprocal resource exchange rather than top-down directives.

Practical Implications: Management must move beyond remote monitoring to foster a digital culture predicated on human-centricity and shared responsibility to maintain organizational resilience.

Paper 2

Purpose: This research explores the **implementation gap** within northern European municipalities, specifically examining why digital well-being tools often fail to produce intended outcomes.

Methodology: An inductive, exploratory qualitative design was employed to analyze the disconnect between managerial intent and employee perception of digital pulse surveys.

Findings: The results uncover managerial myopia, a reductive focus on quantitative data that ignores human context. Paradoxically, employees engage with low-utility tools to protect social resources (belonging) rather than for personal growth, illustrating a defensive use of COR.

Practical Implications: To bridge the gap, HR must shift from administrative data collection to active resource provision, ensuring that digital signals lead to tangible managerial support.

Paper 3

Purpose: This paper examines the socio-technical challenges of implementing digital health-promotion initiatives, focusing on the friction between behavioral nudging and organizational culture.

Methodology: A longitudinal qualitative study was conducted across four organizations, tracking the trajectory of a mobile-based health intervention over several months.

Findings: Success is contingent upon HRM System Strength (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). The research found that interventions fail when they are perceived as intrusions rather than as support, highlighting the need for a **well-being-by-design** philosophy.

Practical Implications: Developers and HR managers should prioritize user experience and boundary-respecting nudges to ensure digital tools are integrated into the relational psychological contract.

Paper 4

Purpose: This study assesses the nexus between **automation maturity and health and well-being** outcomes, including burnout, job satisfaction, and organizational trust.

Methodology: A quantitative approach was used to benchmark organizational automation levels against individual-level survey data.

Findings: Advanced automation maturity is significantly correlated with reduced burnout and increased trust. Higher-skilled employees and female workers showed the highest well-being gains, suggesting that automation can function as a resource that strengthens the relational psychological contract.

Practical Implications: Organizations should view automation not as a labor-replacement tool, but as a well-being-enhancing resource that reduces cognitive load and fosters trust.

Paper 5

Purpose: This research addresses the empirical gap regarding the **impact of e-HRM maturity** on macro-level organizational performance and employee absenteeism.

Methodology: Quantitative regression analysis was performed using Cranet survey data (N >200) from Nordic organizations to measure the efficacy of digital HR functions.

Findings: While basic digital HR services show negligible impacts, the use of extensive maturity (HR analytics and algorithmic processes) is more strongly associated with higher performance and lower absenteeism.

Practical Implications: The strategic value of DHRM is only unlocked at higher stages of maturity. Organizations must invest in sophisticated analytics to realize the mutual gains in performance and well-being.

4.2. Analyses

The section adds the explanation of the trajectory of the research, clarifying the rationale behind the decision to focus on digital well-being tools and the interplay role of HR, management, and employees when it comes to the intention and implementation of those digitally accomplished tools organized by HR. The purpose of the thesis was to study and understand workplace well-being in the post-pandemic (COVID-19) world, how digital well-being of HR initiatives were contributed, delivered, and experienced by employees and by management. Additionally, in Sweden, we asked whether automation and digitalization were a blessing or curse.

Paper 1: Well-being attributes experiences in post-pandemic digital context

The exploratory research in the earlier stage identified and discussed overall workplace well-being attributes from the previously published studies along with empirical evidence from fieldwork.

The follow-up and documentation of workplace well-being within hybrid and remote work under contemporary conditions is crucial for fostering a sustainable and prosperous future for both employees and organizational management. The significant transformation of traditional work dynamics following the pandemic has necessitated that management adopt novel strategies and viewpoints to align with evolving workplace trends and market demands. Well-being at work consists of a comprehensive set of workplace attributes that promote healthy behaviors, enhance health outcomes, and

reinforce workplace culture. The analysis and results from this part (paper 1) of the thesis work identified two major well-being attributes, such as coworkership and workplace care. Coworkership is internationally known as the concept of ‘empowerment’. Coworkership—or, in other words, co-ownership—is *sui generis*, with the Nordic flavor positing as employees’ capacity to manage their relationship with peers, leaders, and the overall organization, where much of the supervisory function is delegated to employees individually and/or collectively (Andersson et al., 2021; Hällstén & Tengblad, 2006). This is prevalent due to the inherent characteristics of digital context understood as boundaryless and timeless.

This paper shows the display of collegiality and comradeship serves as a form of social support for employees who regularly spend a substantial amount of time with their colleagues and peers. Working in a team in a broader context with an interactive and participative mindset in team activities promotes overall positive well-being among employees. Similarly, employees anticipate respect and a sense of affection from their co-workers and supervisors when participating in team-based activities, as these elements are essential for their team's success. In consequence, employees working in this digital environment experience a reduced level of conflict with peers and superiors and cooperate with others through demonstrating behaviors like assisting and comforting the individuals around them. Another attribute of coworkership is encouraging employee responsibility. The delegation of responsibilities to employees occurs when a leader or supervisor grants them the authority to make decisions in their absence, thereby preventing potential business disruptions. This practice not only fosters the development of leadership skills among employees but also enhances their self-efficacy and confidence in fulfilling the expectations set by their superiors. Consequently, such empowerment contributes positively to their overall well-being. The health status of employees at work has a direct impact on their work behavior,

attentiveness, job performance (Goetzel et al., 2009), and work-related stress can be reduced when employees' psychosocial and organizational working conditions are improved through coworkership and workplace care.

Workplace care is a broader attribute, providing nuance that employees experience as work–life balance at work. Flexibility in temporal terms and timelessness is backed up by the remote working conditions that have led to cross-border peer collaboration. However, there is a mixed reaction in the existing research literature. Some studies found that since there is no time boundary, now employees are communicable 24/7 and responsible for accomplishing their tasks in respect to aligning with their international cross-border collaborative team. However, in our empirical study, we identified that employees are positive about working remotely, and about flexibility in time and space. Flexibility in time, duration, and location involves employees' empowerment and their control over certain aspects of their job performances. However, there has been some evidence that was observed where some employees who are extroverted and enjoy company with other colleagues and peers prefer to meet and work in an office environment to avoid loneliness.

Employees with flexible working conditions manage a better work–life balance and enhance their well-being, as documented in previous scholarly work. Based on these assumptions, organizations with their business goals try to align the employees' workplace benefits (such as arranging dine-out team meetings after work or during lunch break) to distinguish themselves from other businesses as they care for their employees. Organizations acquiring digitalization and internal mobility opportunities for their employees tend to follow the contemporary style of working, as prevalent in our findings from this research. Organizations with multiple workspaces in various locations allow their employees to work flexibly and also offer an opportunity to meet

colleagues from other units. This can create salient bonding among employees, as they come across each other, fostering trust-based relationships. Organizations that participate in such an ergonomic set-up for their employees foster a sense of reliability and assume that they are a uniform team focusing on equal care and inclusiveness for all by creating a culture of helpfulness.

Paper 2: Intended HR initiatives through technological inputs (pulse survey)

Paper 2 focuses on the digital HR initiatives taken by HR units to support a healthy workplace environment by encouraging employee engagement surveys and is subsequently about employees' well-being.

Digital involvement at work has been predominant in the current phase of globalization, and challenges at work occur due to the introduction of new ways of working and the use of digital tools and technologies. To understand and reduce tension at work, HR initiatives can function as a perk for employees to feel that management has obligations to look after their well-being. The growing concern over digitalization creates challenges for employees' security issues, along with stress, anxiety, or well-being. HR initiatives towards promoting well-being management for employees' health and well-being digitally are some of the benefits provided to employees at work. Take, for instance, focusing on employees' insight into accepting the short and quick survey offered by management and its impact on employees' job engagement and other subjective well-being outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction). I studied the pulse survey initiatives (initiated by HR) in two public municipalities located in western Sweden. The findings from these two municipalities differed from each other—from the degree to which they embraced the tool to implementation challenges. More importantly, the objective of the survey tool remained unaccomplished for several reasons. In

both municipalities, the survey tool was launched prior to the spread of Covid-19 spread and was introduced to employees as subsidiary and voluntary to use. In response to the HR initiation, most units from municipalities overlooked the tool and did not move forward with it. However, we have collected data from the actively involved units who have been eager to use the tool since its installation at the municipalities.

The engagement at Municipality A was found to be nominally and somewhat moderately passionate about using the pulse survey tool. The perception of the users was documented as user-friendly, not time-consuming, and interesting. The tool's distinctive feature was readily apparent to the employees; however, the administrators (line managers and HR) did not effectively manage the feedback processes related to the outcomes produced by the tool.

Engagement with pulse survey at Municipality B was passionate, fully and sporadically as observed and translated from the interviews conducted. The tool was easy to surf but was not efficient enough to measure the appropriate and realistic statistics from the output, resulting in weekly or monthly evaluations. Some employees described that it is a drawback for them that they could not provide the right reply, as the replies to questions were limited to emojis (e.g., red face = not good, OK face = ok, Good face = Good, Good Smiley face = very good).

However, being fully and sporadically engaged in the survey led to relevant input by the interviewees about the positive and negative aspects of the survey. Employees from a small team may face vulnerabilities of facing reality in weekly meetings if the employee has responded with a red emoji. The supervisor–employee relationship might suffer due to this fact. Often employees do not want to reveal such situations and thus decide not to answer honestly. In the discussion in chapter I elaborate on Bowen and Ostroff 's

(2004) intended, implemented, and experienced theme; the three important instrumentalities accounted for in the pulse study.

Paper 3: Intention, implementation, and the experience gap in digital Interventions

The 3rd paper explores the factors that explain the outcomes of digital health promotion using the nudging approach unfolding the HR intention and the employee experience gap through users' experiences and behavioral changes.

This included the exploration of health intervention tools: how launching was held and management's eagerness to implement them, and how employees interpret this experience with the intervention within their work culture. The findings propagate several key themes for the multifaceted HealthHabit (a pseudonym for the health app) app in four different sized yet digitally involved organizations from different sectors. Nudging seemed to be a blessing, but on the same page, an annoying user perception. 'Nudging' refers to a minor change in the environment in which individuals are given choice options, allowing them to make rational choice decisions. The users sometimes found it annoying when they received repetitive questions when the habit was already adopted, regardless of the nudge. Small changes in habits and increased health consciousness were reported by the users. Interestingly, intrusion and privacy were another key theme, where none of the users thought that organizations have introduced monitoring or intruding into their personal life when this app was voluntarily offered. Some of the users were enthusiastic about using the app, they thought it was a good initiative by management, supporting their physical, mental, and social well-being.

However, the analysis of management ambiguity revealed a lack of sufficient implementation activities. Only one organization demonstrated a strong

commitment to fostering a more engaging workplace environment by employing active and positive leadership that emphasized both performance and work–life balance. In contrast, several other organizations faced challenges, such as ongoing reorganization and restructuring of units and positions. Additionally, one organization experienced financial and organizational crises, which resulted in minimal engagement with the application and hindered the efforts of the human resources department to implement it effectively. The findings from this sub-study exhibit a gap between HR intentions–implementation with the reality of employees’ experience. This resonates with Bowen and Ostroff’s (2004) viewpoints of intended, implemented, and experienced outcomes. However, the challenges encountered during implementation arose from diverse factors. The lack of success was attributable to issues at the organizational, technical, and individual levels. Organizationally, management demonstrated a limited interest in investing resources or prioritizing the expansion of the project. Employees facing greater health challenges require more personalized coaching to facilitate lifestyle improvements, whereas those already in good health primarily engaged with the application. Managerial patience and engagement were constrained, as managers often prioritized operational tasks over promoting healthy lifestyles.

Technically, the tool exhibited limitations, offering insignificant opportunities for user personalization and personal development. For example, encouragement notifications were perceived as intrusive and repetitive over time, fading their effectiveness. At the individual level, many employees were reluctant to allocate additional time toward lifestyle changes, focusing instead on immediate benefits rather than on long-term outcomes. Furthermore, consistency and consensus were lacking within the HR initiative, partly due to communication challenges from HR department. Even though the application was introduced, there was insufficient follow-up upon post-

launch. As noted by Bowen and Ostroff (2004) and Guest (2017), effective communication between involved parties must be clear and reciprocal to establish a shared objective and achieve collective success.

Paper 4: Consequences of workplace well-being in automation maturity

Paper 4 analyses how automation maturity in organizations affects the consequences of well-being (job burnout, job satisfaction, and trust). The Cranet dataset (2020–2021), along with Icelandic data, were used to identify the effects of automation through the consequences workplace well-being. The primary findings indicated a positive correlation between the impact of automation within organizations and its benefits, with women and professionals emerging as the groups that gained the most from this impact. Since then, a limited study has focused on the consequences of well-being in terms of automation maturity. Automation maturity is when an entity has developed its capabilities and readiness to utilize various types of digital tools, resources, and strategies to enhance its operations and overall activities (Nazarova & Rudenko, 2023). The automation of processes at work is meant to improve performance and productivity and may affect the employees' well-being by affecting job design, work boundaries, and relationships. The content and nature of employees' daily work might both positively and negatively impact on employees' overall experiences and functioning at work. For instance, the intensification of jobs, and lack of resources to cope can lead to job burnout, and while providing employees with learning opportunities and other scope for competence development, autonomous decision-making due to advanced technology can create high intrinsic motivation for job satisfaction. Employees fueled by job satisfaction are likely to experience less physical and mental stress and a perception of increased trust.

Paper 5: Technological Maturity through e-HRM concept

The last (5th) paper is a methodologically quantitative paper, where I analyze the implementation of e-HRM activities within the Nordic region, incorporating a comparative analysis between Sweden and the other four countries of Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Iceland. The findings indicate that organizations utilizing extensive e-HRM tools such as Human Resource Information Systems, algorithm-driven processes, and HR analytics demonstrate superior performance outcomes in terms of service quality, productivity, innovation, profitability, and reduced absenteeism. These positive correlations are associated with both the timing and the degree of e-HRM adoption. On the other hand, organizations employing only limited e-HRM functionalities (e.g., employee self-service portals or shared service centers) did not exhibit statistically significant relationships with performance metrics. The maturity of automation within organizations does not necessarily imply enhanced productivity, innovation, or other performance indicators critical for achieving a competitive advantage unless there is pre-existing job satisfaction or well-being among employees in the workplace. Nonetheless, the operation of automation and digital tools contributes to improved efficiency in service delivery and productivity. The analysis further reveals that Sweden exhibits a higher level of automation, reflecting greater e-HRM maturity relative to the broader Nordic context. Notable e-HRM activities include the application of data analytics to support strategic and operational decision-making, such as workforce planning, business expansion, and the innovation of employee benefits through automation and algorithm-based HR processes.

Obtaining an overview of e-HRM involvement in the Nordic countries was essential for examining the process of digitalization and its applications. This foundational knowledge facilitated a subsequent investigation into digital HR

initiatives and the perceptions of individuals regarding the discretionary benefits accessible to them and how employee care is more important than technological advancement to achieve a resource gain and collaborative win-win situation for management and employees. In the next section, the thesis framework is presented.

4.3. The thesis framework

The framework presented in Figure 2 portrays the intricate progression from technological intentions to organizational achievements within the context of the post-pandemic digital workplace. It posits that although technological advancements such as e-HRM systems, automation, and digital interventions (pulse surveys and health apps) are intended to modernize the work environment, their implementation frequently encounters a gap intensified by managerial shortsightedness. The model posits that for these initiatives to produce effective results, they must be grounded in human-centered processes defined as experienced reality, wherein workplace care and coworkership engage psychological mechanisms such as Social Exchange Theory and the principles of the resource caravan. By emphasizing these social resources, organizations can effectively bridge the divide between strategic intent and practical execution, thereby fostering dual outcomes: improved employee well-being, evidenced by diminished burnout and enhanced trust, alongside substantial organizational benefits manifested in elevated performance and reduced absenteeism.

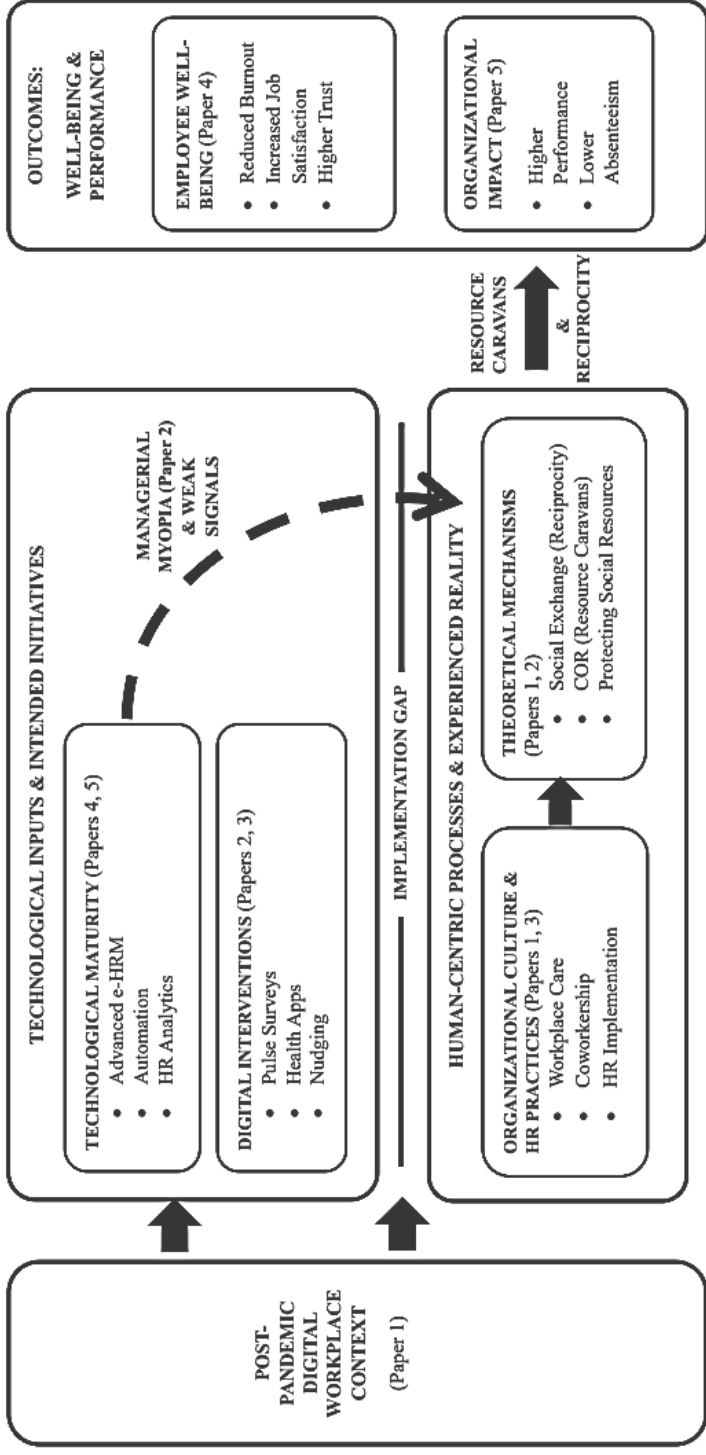


Figure 2: Digital Workplace Well-being Initiatives: Exploring Intentions and Experiences

5. Discussion

This discussion synthesizes the findings from the five analyzed studies to evaluate the critical role of HRM in mediating the shift from traditional work structures to contemporary digital environments. By integrating Guest's (2017) well-being-oriented framework, Bowen and Ostroff's (2004) HRM system strength model, and the motivational logic of Conservation of Resources (COR) and Social Exchange Theory (SET), we can analyze why a significant implementation gap persists despite increasing technological maturity.

5.1. The Shift Towards a Human-Centered Approach in a Digitally Transformed Environment

The contemporary workplace has transitioned from a physical-centric model to a digitally prone environment defined by remote work, e-HRM, and digital health interventions, as I showed in papers 1, 2, 3, and 5. However, as evidenced in scholarly papers (e.g., Beer et al., 2015), Guest (2017) argues that the dominant HRM models have historically prioritized shareholder financial returns over employee interests. This 'managerialist biasness' is evident in the findings of paper 5, where limited e-HRM maturity (focused on self-service) failed to correlate with organizational performance.

The traditional transactional model of employment relationships has transitioned into a more collaborative and human-centered partnership (Yalenios & d'Armagnac, 2023). The shift is not merely superficial but represents a fundamental re-evaluation of the role of the individual within the organization. The scope of HRM has broadened significantly, moving beyond the historical pursuit of lean efficiency to prioritize the enhancement of employee well-being as a strategic objective (Banerjee & Sharma, 2025).

This pivot has been accelerated by the profound uncertainties of the post-pandemic era, which underscored the fragility of traditional workforce models. My findings from paper 1 suggest that a shift toward a well-being-oriented HRM framework is a basic necessity and timely to navigate in the post-pandemic context. The identification of *workplace care* and *coworkership* reinforces Guest's (2017) assertion that the primary purpose of HRM must evolve beyond financial optimization toward a 'mutual gains' model that places employee psychological health at the center of the digital strategy.

5.2. System Strength and the Implementation Gap

The findings highlight a critical discrepancy—the *implementation gap*—which binds management's well-being aspirations from the tangible experiences of individual employees. Despite the moral intent behind the operation of digital well-being tools, as explored in papers 2 and 3, the workforce often perceives these initiatives through a lens of cynicism. This suggests that without a strong HRM system (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) to bridge this divide, the mere provision of digital resources is insufficient to foster a genuine culture of workplace care.

To conceptualize this dynamic through a scholarly, yet accessible, lens, we can turn to Bowen and Ostroff's (2004) foundational framework of HRM System Strength. Think of the HR department as a central broadcast tower. For employees to effectively *tune-in*, allowing them to adjust their behavior or feel the warmth of organizational support, the signal must be transmitted with high salience and clarity. When the signal is robust, the message is unmistakable. However, when the broadcast is weak and frail, the intended strategic intent is drowned out by the static of workplace ambiguity. In

essence, without a high signal-to-noise ratio, the most well-meaning HR initiatives are lost to the interference of daily operations. A strong system requires three important characteristics: distinctiveness, consistency, and consensus. Distinctiveness refers to the initiative that must stand out and be seen as relevant. Consistency confirms that the message must be the same over time and across different managers, while consensus means there must be agreement among policymakers and those who implement them (e.g., line managers).

As observed in paper 2, managerial myopia manifests as a strategic narrow-mindedness, where leaders prioritize raw digital analytics at the expense of the human lived experience. This limited perspective prevents management from grasping the big picture and effectively dilutes the impact of their well-being initiatives; by focusing on trivial data points, they muffle the essential signals of care that employees need to feel supported. When managers only care about how many people clicked ‘submit’ on a survey rather than *why* they are stressed, the system loses its consistency. Likewise, paper 3 shows that when digital apps/tools are used to nudge employees without a transparent purpose, the initiative lacks distinctiveness. It feels like a routine work rather than a choice. According to Bowen and Ostroff (2004), these weak and frail systems fail to send the unambiguous signals needed to build a positive climate, directly contributing to the post-pandemic disengagement noted in Paper 1.

5.3. The Economy of Effort: Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

When Bowen and Ostroff explain *how* the message is sent, Hobfoll’s Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory explains *why* employees react the way they do. COR theory suggests that humans have a limited ‘well’ of

resources (time, energy, social status, and mental health). We are biologically programmed to protect these resources and are highly stressed when we feel they are being drained without a return on investment. In paper 2, an appealing paradox appeared, as employees continued to use low-utility digital tools even when they felt they gained nothing from them. Through the lens of COR, we can see that employees were not using the tools to get more engaged at work; rather they were using them to protect their social resources. They feared that *not* participating would signal a lack of belonging or loyalty to the organization.

When HR fails to translate digital data into Resource Caravans a term from COR (Holmgreen et al., 2017) referring to a cluster of supportive resources like better equipment, more time, or emotional support, the digital tool itself becomes a demand that drains the employee's limited energy.

5.4. The Evolution of the Social Contract in the Digital Epoch

From a Strategic HRM perspective, the employee–employer relationship is increasingly understood not through a transactional lens, but as a relational psychological contract rooted in Social Exchange Theory (SET). Unlike a transactional exchange, which is finite and strictly economic, a relational contract is characterized by an open-ended, long-term orientation where the primary currencies are trust, loyalty, and socio-emotional support. As evidenced in paper 3, when management adopts a well-being application, it is not merely providing a utility; it is attempting to make a strategic investment in this socio-emotional bank account.

This dynamic is most rationally explained through the norm of reciprocity. When HR functions as a strategic advocate for well-being, it transmits a high-salience signal of organizational investment. Employees, in turn, perceive this

care as a social debt, which they are psychologically inclined to reciprocate through affective commitment and discretionary effort. Essentially, when an organization treats well-being as a shared resource rather than as an operational cost, it ignites a self-sustaining cycle of mutual benefit.

However, the transition from traditional to contemporary digital work (highlighted in papers 4 and 5) has significantly disrupted this delicate exchange. In traditional settings, workplace care (paper 1) was tangible, manifested through face-to-face interactions and visible indications. In the contemporary digital environment, this care is mediated by screens and algorithms, which can inadvertently ‘transactionalize’ the relationship. As Guest (2017) warns, when HRM becomes overly gripped on shareholder returns and efficiency metrics, and employees voices are not heard clearly, the social exchange breaks down, leading to the disengagement noted in the post-pandemic era (paper 1).

To mitigate this, organizations must adopt a *workplace well-being-by-design* philosophy (a combination of papers 2 and 3). By creating digital tools that are intuitive, helpful, and respectful of personal boundaries, management sends an unambiguous signal that the employee is valued as a human stakeholder. This high-quality exchange fosters trust and job satisfaction, that our quantitative data (Papers 4 and 5) identify as the hallmark of mature digital organizations.

5.5. Navigating Resource Dynamics: COR and SET

The findings of this research emphasize that digital interventions are not merely technical tools but exchange currencies within the organization.

In my second paper, it can be observed that employees participate in low utility digital tools (e.g., pulse surveys) as a strategic effort to protect their

social resources and organizational belonging. However, for these tools to achieve their intended objectives, HR must ensure they contribute to resource caravans. A resource caravan is a set of interconnected resources like autonomy, trust, and support (e.g., COR theory) (Holmgreen et al., 2017). As my fourth paper indicates, when automation maturity is high, it acts as a resource that decreases burnout and enhances trust, particularly for professionals who can leverage technology as a tool for job crafting (Banerjee & Sharma, 2025).

The success of digital health interventions relies on the principle of reciprocity inherent in SET. When management implements workplace well-being-by-design (paper 3) through the promotion of HR initiatives by prioritizing the user experience and the human context, it signals a commitment to the employee. In response, employees are more likely to utilize these tools and reciprocate with higher job satisfaction and lower absenteeism (paper 5).

5.6. Methodological Integration: A Holistic Perspective

The dual methodological approach of this thesis allows for a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics. The quantitative results (papers 4 and 5) provide a macro-level view of how digital maturity influences performance and burnout. Meanwhile, the qualitative narratives (papers 1, 2, and 3) unveil the human aspects of the implementation gap. This triangulation proves that while the digital workplace is structurally robust (quantitative), it is the psychological workplace (qualitative) that determines whether a well-being initiative is adopted or rejected.

5.7. The Systemic Challenges of Digital Implementation

In addition to the identified results from this thesis, it appears that effective implementation of digital HR initiatives is not a straightforward technical process but rather a multifaceted intervention that often encounters challenges within the Intention-Implementation-Experience (I-I-E) gap (von Thiele Schwarz et al., 2021). Drawing on the framework by Skivington et al. (2024), it becomes apparent that such initiatives tend to fail when organizations approach them as plug-and-play solutions, neglecting the intrinsic organizational complexities and the sustainability paradox (Poon & Law, 2022). This paradox creates a foundational failure point, when managers are pressured to prioritize short-term economic performance and lean efficiency over long-term human sustainability. Digital tools are often perceived by employees not as facilitators of well-being but as mechanisms of surveillance and as an additional burden.

This systemic friction is extended by the temporal constraints met by mid-level managers. Applying COR theory, managers often enter a state of resource loss spirals, where the high rational demands of mastering new digital logics compete with existing operational pressures (Holmgren et al., 2017; Meijerink et al., 2021). Under such conditions of resource loss, managers naturally protect their remaining temporal and mental energy by reverting to analogue (old routine) habits, a survival mechanism that leads to the total abandonment of new digital strategies at work. The human dimension of this failure is further explained by a professional identity mismatch between HR practitioners and line management (Häll, et al., 2023).

As Ferm et al. (2024) demonstrate, if HR practitioners adopt a defender identity, focusing strictly on compliance and rules, they fail to provide the psychological safety required for managers to experiment with digital change. Without an HR driver to facilitate the transition, managers lack some needed

health-promoting attributes and the capacity to craft sustainable work practices (Dellve & Eriksson, 2017; Dellve & Williamsson, 2022). As a result, the implementation fails because the manager is unable to assist in job crafting within the digital context (Banerjee & Sharma, 2025), leaving a persistent research–practice gap where the technology remains an external burden rather than an integrated organizational capability (Paauwe & Van De Voorde, 2025).

In conclusion, ultimately, reducing the gap between intended and experienced well-being initiatives requires HR to move from being an advocate for management to being the Strategic Guardian of the employee experience. By applying the logic of Bowen and Ostroff (2004) to ensure system strength and leveraging COR theory to build resource caravans, HR can ensure that the transition to a contemporary digital environment is a source of gain, rather than loss, for the workforce.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Final Words

This research has navigated the complex terrain of the post-pandemic digital workplace, highlighting that the path from technological investment to employee well-being is rarely a straight line. By synthesizing the findings from five distinct studies, this thesis concludes that technological maturity (papers 4 & 5) is an insufficient driver of organizational health if it is not balanced by strategic human-centricity. My thesis makes several contributions, outlined below.

6.2. Contributions

6.2.1. Theoretical Contributions: Refreshing HR narratives

1. Reconceptualizing HRM System Strength for the Digital Interface

Traditional HRM theory (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) assumes that HR signals are sent through policies and face-to-face leadership interactions. While I argue that my research brings contemporary workplace notions, where user experiences (UX) and digital interfaces are the signals to achieve a better workplace environment, distinctiveness and consistency are the technical attributes. The well-being apps/tools with value-added services can strengthen the relationship between employees and management while the intrusive nature and technical anomalies of digital tools are an expression of a weak HR signal regardless of management's moral intentions. My work contributes to the contemporary atmosphere of digitalization at work towards the digital touchpoint moving on from boardroom signaling.

2. The Social Resource Paradox (An Extension of COR Theory)

The second contribution is the extension of Conservation of Resources Theory (COR). In paper 2, I found that employees use the pulse survey as ‘a low utility’ resource to prevent the loss of social resources like trust, belongingness, and loyalty. While employees normally use tools to gain resources. I contribute to identify a new type of resource-defensive behavior in DHRM. Digital adoption rates can be high in terms of clicking the buttons while employee engagement and well-being could simultaneously be low, which offers a major contribution to understanding the implementation gap.

3. Transitioning from Managerialist to Pluralistic DHRM

My thesis offers a theoretical bridge between strategic maturity (paper 5) and workplace attributes (paper 1). I argue that digital/e-HRM maturity is reached when technology is not advanced, but when these technologies successfully facilitate the relational psychological contract. Building upon Guest (2017), my work in paper 2 particularly identifies the managerial myopia which is the primary barrier to social exchanges. This shift marks the progression from a technical achievement to a socio-emotional development.

6.2.2. Methodological Contribution: Bridging the Macro–Micro Divide

Supported by a multi-methodological triangulation of quantitative Cranet data and longitudinal qualitative narratives, this study provides a unique empirical roadmap for identifying where digital interventions fail to resonate with the workforce and how a ‘well-being-by-design’ philosophy can restore social exchange.

1. The first methodological contribution is multi-level triangulation of the implementation gap. By combining paper 5 on e-HRM maturity (Cranet data) with paper 1 on workplace well-being attributes, paper 2 on pulse surveys, and paper 3 on well-being tools initiatives, the study creates ‘a 3D view’ of

the implementation gap. Most other studies are either purely quantitative (focusing on performance) or qualitative (focusing on emotions) in nature. In contrast, my methodology allows us to measure the distance between organizational maturity and individual lived experiences, providing an outline (blueprint) for how to measure the gap in future HRM research.

2. Mapping the experiential trajectory (longitudinal insight) in paper 3 through the use of longitudinal semi-structured interviews to pursue mobile app intervention is a significant methodological strength. Instead of just studying the app, I focused on identifying how specific moments, like nudges, can often manifest as annoyance, which provides a more granular understanding of how organizational culture and technical factors interplay over time, particularly in the recent digitally prone environment.

3. Quantifying automation maturity as a well-being variable is my final contribution, where in paper 4, I use data collected at the organizational level to establish maturity before measuring individual burnout. Treating maturity as a variable provides a more scientific way to analyze why certain organizations succeed with AI while others fail.

6.3. Implications, Limitations and Directions for Future Research

6.3.1. Managerial Recommendations: Translating Theory into Action

To bridge the implementation gap and overcome managerial myopia, HR leaders and practitioners may adopt the following strategic shifts:

1. Transition to "Human-Centric Digital Audits": Before implementing any e-HRM tool (such as pulse surveys or health apps), management must evaluate the tool's signal strength (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). This involves

ensuring the tool is not just technically sound, but that its purpose is clearly communicated to employees to avoid it being perceived as a nudging surveillance tool.

2. Cultivate Resource Caravans via Data: HR must move away from data for the sake of data. When digital tools identify stress or disengagement, the response must be a tangible resource provision (e.g., increased autonomy, professional development, or reduced digital workload). This ensures the social exchange remains balanced and employees perceive a return on their digital engagement.

3. Empower Line Managers as "Digital Interpreters": Organizations should invest in training line managers to look beyond digital metrics. Managers need the skills to interpret data through a human lens, ensuring that digital nudges are supported by face-to-face (or synchronous remote) workplace care and coworkership (Paper 1).

6.3.2 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this thesis provides a robust multi-methodological view of DHRM, it is important to acknowledge its boundaries and future directions for researchers to dive deeper into reducing the gap between research and practice.

1. Contextual Specificity: A significant portion of the quantitative data (Cranet) and qualitative interviews focused on Nordic contexts. Future research should explore whether these well-being-oriented expectations hold true in more hierarchically structured or emerging economies, where the relational psychological contract may be defined differently.

2. The Digital Divide in Skill Levels: Paper 4 suggests that high-skilled professionals gain more from automation than lower-skilled employees. Future longitudinal studies should specifically investigate how to design *well-being-by-design* tools that are inclusive of the entire workforce, preventing digital well-being inequality.

3. Technological Pace: Rapid advancement of generative AI occurred during the later stages of this research. Future studies should apply the COR theory lens specifically to Gen-AI to see if algorithmic pressure creates new types of resource loss that traditional e-HRM models have not yet captured.

In closing, this thesis moves the conversation of DHRM from ‘What tools should we use?’ to ‘How do these tools make our employees feel?’ By proving that digital maturity is a socio-technical achievement rather than a purely technical one, this work provides a new, human-centric compass for navigating the future of work and of HR, as the touchpoint in focusing on these issues.

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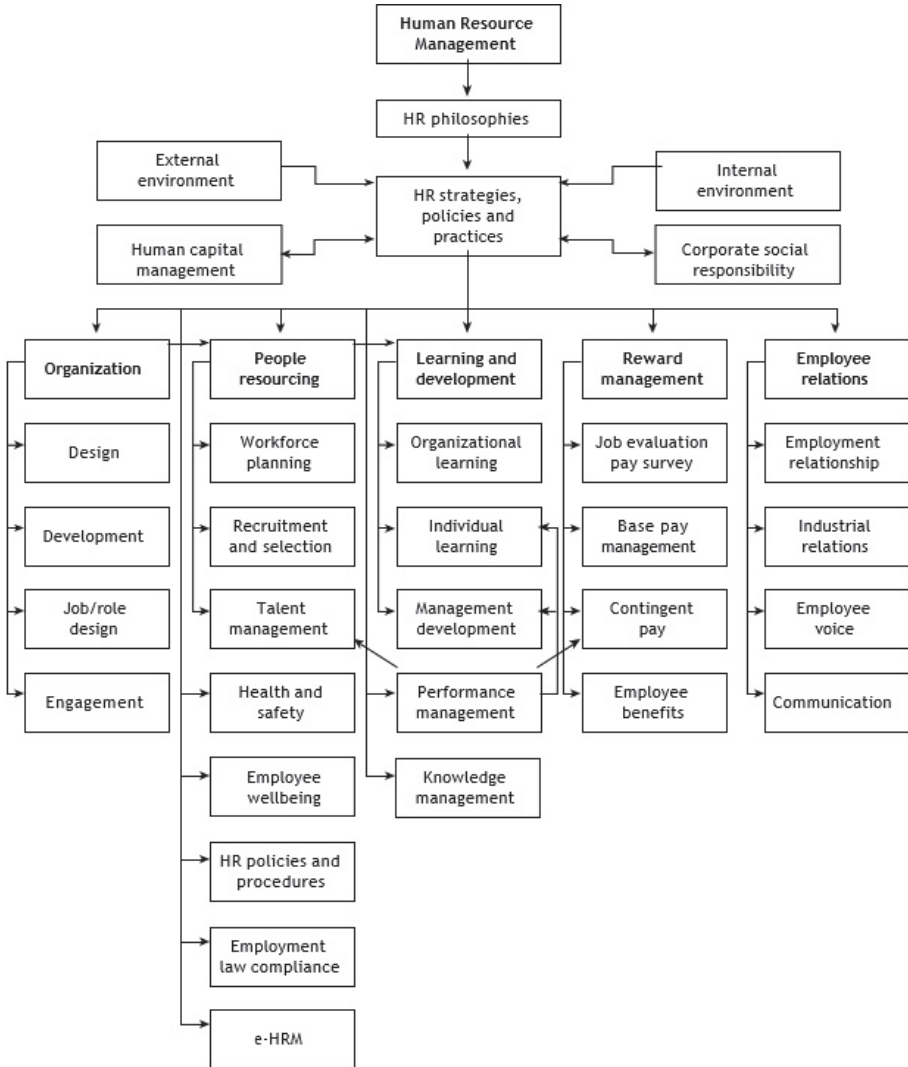
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Appendix

Appendix 1

HRM System Model (Adapted from Armstrong, 2012)



Appendix 2

Wellbeing initiatives and strategies suggested by scholars for example

Well-being initiatives/strategies	Discussed in scholarly articles
Development and implementation of policies	David Guest, 2017
To create a supportive work environment	Peccei et al., 2013
Offer resource and programs	Nielsen, & Miraglia, 2017
Monitoring and feedback	Bailey et al., 2017
Supportive leadership	Kelloway et al., 2013
Accessibilities of resources for remote workers	Grant et al., 2007

**Digital well-being-oriented HR intention,
implementation and employee perception in the
current time.**

INTERVIEW INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

I am a PhD candidate under the direction of Professor Stefan Tengblad (e-mail: stefan.tengblad@gu.se) at the department of Business Administration, School of Business, Economics & Law, University of Gothenburg. I am conducting this interview in conjunction with my thesis, studying Digital well-being initiatives and intentions focusing on HR contribution to reduce the gap between intended by the management, implemented by the line managers/HR, and perceived by the frontline employees. I am requesting your participation, which will involve a short open-ended informal interview and may take you about twenty-five to thirty minutes. You must be at least 19 years old to participate.

Your participation is purely voluntary and admitting to participate will be considered your consent to attend the interview. The interview is confidential and anonymous. Your answers will be kept confidential and will be combined with others and used only for research purposes. It is important that you respond to each item honestly and accurately. Information obtained during the study will remain confidential, to the extent allowed by law. Furthermore, the transcribed interviews will be kept only until the data are entered into the computer, at which time all interviews will be destroyed.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact me at nazneen.rony@gu.se. Additionally, after the completion of the research, a summary of the result will be available for your review. The summary will have no identifying information. If you would like a copy of the summary, please contact me via the e-mail listed above.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Nazneen Rony

Appendix 4

Sample Interview Questions for Digital Tools (Pulse survey & HealthHabit App):

- *Has your company started to use it?*
- *Who approached you and how did you know about this tool at first?*
- *Does it usually happen in all cases of introducing something new in this way or sometimes there comes a common information mail and you know from there?*
- *Has your manager talked about this tool in the meeting or in other sources?*
- *Did you have any introduction of this tool and how to use and why to use??*
- *What is your perception/opinion about this tool? Why are you using this tool?*
- *Did you face any kind of challenges to initiate this tool?*
- *Why do you think it is important to use such kind of tools?*
- *Why have you decided to use this tool? (voluntary). How will it improve your work at workplace?*
- *Do you think this can somewhat help you to perform/focus/engage better at work or reach your goal more easily?*
- *What is your expectations of this tool?*
- *What is your observation about HR/administration promoting this tool?*
- *Is there any other essential variables that you think make you motivated to work here for this company? (e.g., good workplace environment, culture, good boss, peers, good remuneration, or something else)*

- *[Stress and work life balance (wellbeing promotion), Physical, Psychological (Emotions/), Social (Inclusion, respect, putting value in other peoples' opinion, good manners); Mindfulness]*
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