

# NAVIGATING DIGITAL STRAIN: THE ROLE OF DIGITAL LEADERSHIP AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN DIGITAL BURNOUT VIA MEDIATING ROLE SUSTAINABLE HRM PRACTICES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS OF PAKISTAN

Dr. Muhammad Naeem Shahid<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Rao Arif Mahmood Khan<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Rabia Mumtaz<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer Business Administration, Cholistan IBA, CUVAS, Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Business Management and Administrative Sciences, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, DHA Suffa University, Karachi

<sup>1</sup>naeemshahid@cuvas.edu.pk, <sup>2</sup>rao.arif@iub.edu.pk, <sup>3</sup>rabia.mumtaz@dsu.edu.pk

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18782424>

## Keywords

Digital Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Sustainable HRM, Digital Burnout

## Article History

Received: 27 December 2025

Accepted: 11 February 2026

Published: 26 February 2026

Copyright @Author

Corresponding Author: \*

Dr. Muhammad Naeem Shahid

## Abstract

Employee exposure to technology-related stress has increased due to the workplace's fast digitalization, making digital burnout a serious organizational risk. Using sustainable human resource management techniques as a mediating mechanism, this study examines the relationship between digital leadership, emotional intelligence and digital burnout. Data were gathered from 390 public and private school teachers and administrators using a cross-sectional survey design. The proposed relationships were tested using structural equation modeling. The results show that while digital leadership and emotional intelligence have a negative impact on digital burnout, they also have a positive impact on sustainable HRM practices. The links between digital leadership, digital burnout, and emotional intelligence and digital burnout were found to be somewhat mediated by sustainable HRM, underscoring its function in converting leadership and emotional competencies into decreased burnout. Furthermore, sustainable HRM directly reduces digital burnout, highlighting the significance of sustainable HR practices in fostering worker wellbeing. The study advances the Job Demands-Resources framework in digitalized work environments by combining leadership, emotional intelligence, sustainable HRM practices, and burnout into a unified model. Practically speaking, the findings highlight the necessity for government to make investments in digital leadership, develop emotional intelligence, and put in place long-term HR programs in order to lower employee burnout and boost output.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing educational reforms have expedited the rapid digitization of education, which has drastically changed teaching and learning environments all around the world (Li, 2025). Digital technologies are being progressively incorporated into

administrative, communication, evaluation, and instructional delivery procedures in Pakistan's educational sector (Akram, 2021). Increased workloads, continuous connectivity, and extended screen time are only a few of the major psychological and professional issues that these

changes have brought to school teachers, even while they have improved access to education and instructional flexibility (Siddiqui, 2023). Because of this, digital fatigue has become a major issue in the field of education (Mushtaque, 2022).

Digital leadership and emotional intelligence (EI) have emerged as critical elements impacting teachers' experiences and wellbeing in this changing digital educational environment (Ertiö, 2024). The ability of school administrators and heads to strategically use digital tools, encourage technology-driven pedagogical innovation, and mentor teachers through digital transformation while upholding a positive work environment is known as "digital leadership" in educational settings (Karakose, 2023). It has been demonstrated that effective digital leadership may lessen the uncertainty, role ambiguity, and stress that come with teaching with a lot of technology, especially in situations where teachers must quickly adjust to new digital platforms and teaching techniques (Loor, 2021).

Emotional intelligence, which allows educators to identify, control, and manage their own emotions as well as those of pupils and coworkers, is equally crucial (Ertiö, 2024). Emotionally intelligent teachers are better able to handle technostress, manage emotional tiredness, and preserve psychological resilience in digitally mediated learning environments (Shaban, 2025). According to earlier research, emotional intelligence is a vital personal resource in high-demand digital work environments since it not only directly lowers burnout but also improves teachers' ability to react favorably to organizational efforts and leadership support (Anwar, 2025).

Digital burnout, which is characterized by emotional tiredness, cognitive overload, and decreased professional efficacy, has grown more common among Pakistani school teachers in spite of these protective characteristics. Teachers' exposure to digital stressors has increased due to ongoing online instruction, digital reporting obligations, virtual communication with parents and administrators, and a lack of institutional support. In schools, where digital adoption has surpassed the creation of enabling organizational

structures and regulations, this problem is most noticeable.

Sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) techniques are essential in moderating this situation. Through supportive leadership, professional development, workload balance, psychological safety, and equitable performance management, sustainable HRM in schools prioritizes long-term teacher well-being (Ramgolam, 2025). Sustainable HRM practices can greatly reduce digital burnout by creating a resilient and supportive learning environment when they are in line with digital leadership and teachers' emotional capacities (Nakra, 2025). However, there is still a dearth of empirical data on the mediating function of sustainable HRM in educational environments, particularly in developing nations like Pakistan.

In light of these interconnected dynamics, this study intends to investigate the mediating role of sustainable HRM practices in public and private schools in Punjab, Pakistan, as well as the impact of digital leadership and emotional intelligence on digital burnout among school teachers. By concentrating on school teachers—a crucial but understudied workforce segment—this research adds to the expanding body of knowledge on educational leadership, teacher well-being, and sustainable workforce management in digitally transforming educational systems.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Digital Burnout

Originally the term "burnout" to refer to a psychological state brought on by ongoing pressures at work (Glandorf, 2025). According to prior studies burnout consist of three aspects: diminished personal achievement, depersonalization, and emotional weariness (Maslach, 1981). A person's decreased emotional condition as a result of stress and work overload is reflected in emotional exhaustion, whereas depersonalization refers to unfavorable sentiments toward coworkers or students.

Reduced personal accomplishment is characterized by a negative self-perception and a sense of ineffectiveness. Burnout is thought to be mostly caused by long-term job stress, particularly

in human care occupations like teaching (Skaalvik, 2020). Burnout is often observed by the people who are working in human service department such as education. For example, teachers face this burnout situation due to high job demand and extra responsibilities (Paudel, 2025). Specifically in the context of Pakistan, lack of support, extra work duties, students' misbehaviors, lack of social recognition are the common factors of teacher's burnout (Perveen, 2025). Previous studies have clearly stated that teachers are the backbone of educational infrastructure. However, wellbeing of teachers is most ignoring part of it. In recent days researchers are focusing on the sustainable development of human resources. Studies mentioning that teachers psychological health is very crucial to understand and explore to get a good performance results. Current studies also exploring the interplay of leadership, emotional regulation, sustainable HRM and burnout in the context of education. However, after pandemic of COVID 19 some new factors have arisen in this context such as digital leadership, technology infrastructure, social media, online communication, online learning and artificial intelligence.

Therefore, countries like Pakistan are facing such issues due to teachers lack of understanding about technology, poor technology infrastructure in institutions, lack of trainings (Anwar, 2025). The sudden inclusion of technology in education creates an ambiguity among teachers which leads to communication, challenges, personal dissatisfaction, job insecurity, and burnout (Glandorf, 2025). The COVID 19 force the teachers to extensive use of technology specifically due to distance learning policies of government. Hence, that was the reason that teachers need to learn the use of technology in education and adopt new technological tool of learning and teaching along with extension of working hours. This constant and sudden exposure of digital tools causes stress, emotional exhaustion, mental disturbance characterized by digital burnout.

## 2.2 Digital Leadership

The combination of digital skills and leadership abilities required to leverage the advantages of digital technology and enhance corporate performance is known as "digital leadership" (Lin, 2025). The foundation of DL is the integration of digital and leadership skills to motivate and inspire followers to accomplish the organization's strategic objectives (Tigre, 2025). Digital technology is essential for advancing changes in many industries, leading to two main effects: a more thorough investigation of potential and the effectiveness and economy of cost expenditure. It has a beneficial effect when new skill sets are needed to successfully lead sustainability of businesses in a changing digital world. Having a competent digital leader who helps to improve the digital business strategy leads to better business performance (Zia, 2025). at order to increase productivity and achieve long-term goals, executives at companies with a digital history are also more likely to encourage digital transformation across the entire organization (Lin, 2025). DL has a beneficial effect on innovation performance, open innovation, digital innovation, sustainable performance, and organizational performance, as demonstrated by the earlier study (Zia, 2025). However, in the context of IT sectors, none of the earlier research found the impact of DL. Manufacturers and suppliers can better understand each other's demands and provide better customer service by forming strategic alliances. By sharing data on demand, manufacturing time, and inventory obsolescence, supplier integration can help businesses get ready for timely production (Tarsuslu, 2025).

Therefore, based on the above discussion it is clear that if a leader had good digital skills along with his leadership role. He will motivate his subordinates to learn the news digital skills and offer than new opportunities of training and development. In return this action will bring the positive results in the form of enhanced performance and reduced digital burnout.

### 2.3 Emotional Intelligence

(Landy, 2005) examined several types of intelligence, with a focus on social intelligence, in the early 19th century, which is when emotional intelligence (EI) first emerged. Since social intelligence was first hypothesized and introduced by (Mayer, 1995) it might be considered a precursor of emotional intelligence (EI) and is now regarded as a component of EI. By discussing one's own emotions, recognizing those of others, and building a relationship with them, (Goleman, 2001) is one of the authors who popularized the idea of emotional intelligence.

The ability to correctly recognize and comprehend one's own emotional boundaries as well as those of others is referred to as emotional intelligence. This ability sets us apart from others in terms of how we behave. Unlike cognitive intelligence (IQ), which is innate, this type of intelligence is flexible and best suited to the particular circumstances we face (Nica, 2024). Recent research has focused on emotional intelligence (EI) as an important concept for employees to effectively regulate their own emotions while doing their job duties. In this context, emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role because public sector employees, particularly public managers, frequently handle stressful tasks and responsibilities (Lee, 2018). The majority of job duties in the public service occupations are emotionally draining (Bayighomog, 2022). Employees with high emotional intelligence have a positive attitude, demonstrating more satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty to their job and organization. This, in turn, fosters a favorable climate that promotes enhanced work performance and the delivery of high-quality services with low job stress (Miao, 2017). Based on the above discussion current study proposed that EI has a direct relationship with digital burnout. It has been demonstrated that EI can reduce stress in high-pressure situations, which may help prevent burnout. But little is known about its mediation function in the connection between burnout and technostress in critical care nurses.

(Shaban, 2025)

### 2.4 Sustainable HRM Practices

The context of HRM is important and subsequently under the researcher's consideration from the last decade (Jackson, 2014). However, this area of Sustainable HRM is still under-theorized scholars are trying to explore this construct more and extend the existent literature of HRM from a different theoretical perspective (Wu, 2025). Studies on arguing the necessity to rethink HRM (human resource management), as revealed by the literature of HRM that human resources are becoming rare in the future. Specifically, skilled and experienced human resources. According to literature conventional HRM practices only focus on profitability and human resource performance instead of their care and wellbeing (Stankevičiūtė, 2018). Further, (Manzoor, 2019) have stated that Sustainable HRM is a new construct and not fully explored. Therefore, need to examine the relationship in the context of Pakistan.

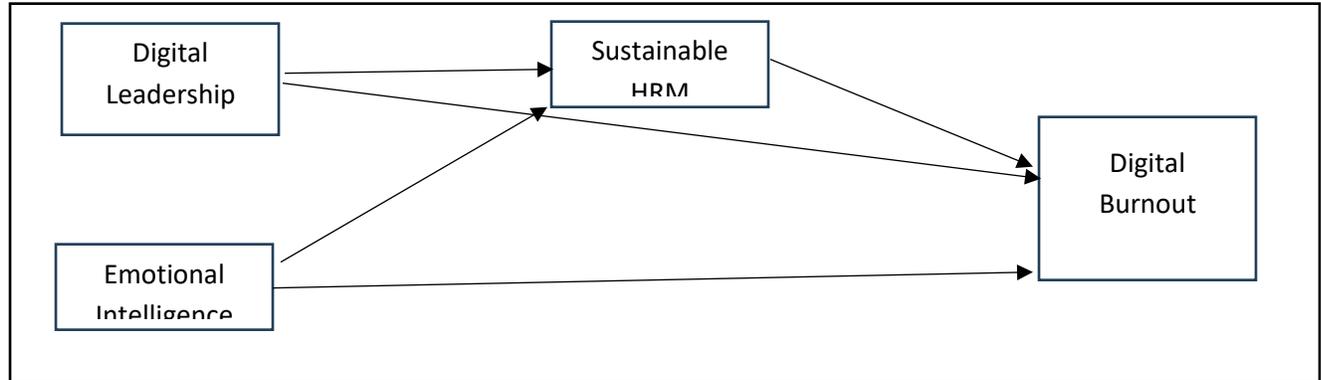
The research of sustainable HRM indicated various Sustainable HRM practices applied in the different organizations of Switzerland and Lithuania having the following characteristics: care of workers, employee's peripheral partnership, profitability, justice and equivalence with employees, Training and development. Hence, administrations need more diverse HRM practices, which instantaneously reflect the sustainability of human resources. Previous, studies of sustainability, reveals that modern academic research focused and elaborates the features of sustainable HRM ( Stankevičiūtė & Savanevičienė, 2018a).

Currently, there is a growing interest of scholars in human resource practices study that focuses on the employee's behaviors and attitudes (Wu, 2025). Before, scholars conducted most of the research in western countries regarding traditional HRM practices. However, the concept of sustainable HRM is pioneering and new to connect sustainability and HRM. The comprehensive definition of Sustainable HRM is given by Ehnert, (2016) "the adaption of HRM strategies and practices that enables the organization to achieve the financial, social, and economic goals, over a long-term time horizon,

while controlling for unintended side effects and negative feedback of HRM strategies and practices on human resources”. Sustainable HRM encourages workers to take an active role in improving their well-being. According to empirical research, employees report lower levels of stress, work-family conflict, and burnout when

firms more explicitly implement sustainable HRM principles (Cheng, 2023). Based on the above discussion current study hypothesized that sustainable HRM have relationship with successful implementation of digital leadership and emotional intelligence of human resource along with help in reduction of digital burnout.

**Theoretical Research Framework**



**3. Research Methodology**

During this era of sustainable development digital leadership, EI and Sustainable HRM practices contribute to reduce the digital burnout. Moreover, current study illustrates the mediation effect of sustainable HRM practices between DL, EI and DB. To conduct this research researchers, collect the data form different public and private schools. The respondents of current study are school teachers and administrators. A self-administer survey was conducted along with online email service to collect data from distant respondents. Current study uses the purposive sampling technique to add the members which are motivated to participate in survey.

Only 390 of the 450 teachers who were initially called out returned the full questionnaires. Eighty percent of the respondents had a master's degree, and 20 percent were full-time teachers and Ph.D. candidates. The participants' gender distribution was 37% female and 63% male. The age range of the participants was 25–60 years old. 30% of the partakers had more than 20 years of schooling experience, 40% had between 10 and 20 years, and the remaining 30% had less than ten years.

**3.1 Instruments**

Four instruments were used in this study to evaluate different features. Testing the link between DL, EI, SHRM, and DB is the goal of the current study. Five research tools were employed in the current study to test the correlations. A seven-point Likert scale is used for this study.

**3.1.1 Digital burnout scale**

The "Digital Burnout Scale," created by Erten and Özdemir [68], was the tool utilized to gather data for this study. Three subdimensions are included in this scale, which was created to measure people's levels of digital burnout: "digital aging," "digital deprivation," and "emotional exhaustion." The validity of this scale was established by the researchers in terms of construct validity and item content. Furthermore, each scale's and its components' Cronbach Alpha coefficient was determined to be above 0.82, suggesting an appropriate level.

**3.1.2 Sustainable HRM Scale**

Items for the Independent variable Sustainable HRM (Employability, self-responsibility) were adapted from Aibaghi-Esfahani et al. (2017).

Items of work-life balance were adapted from the study of (Brough et al., 2014), and items of training were adapted from the study of Manzoor (2019).

**3.1.3 Digital Leadership Scale**

Six items were employed in this study to gauge digital leadership. Regarding digital leadership, we utilized the following sample item: "A digital leader increases the organization's employees' awareness of the risks associated with information technologies."

**3.1.4 Emotional Intelligence**

The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale is a self-report scale designed by Wong and Law (2002) to measure EI based on 16 items grouped into four factors (four items per factor): self-emotion appraisal (SEA), others' emotion appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE), and regulation of emotion (ROE) (Wong, 2002).

**4. Data Analysis**

Data analysis Using SPSS 23.0, descriptive and correlational analyses were performed. Since all of the data were standardized, the study's hypothesis was examined using SEM PLS. After fitting the measurement model to the data, the underlying structural model was examined. The overall fitness of the proposed model was evaluated using fit indices such  $\chi^2/df$ , GFI, CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR. A satisfactory fit was indicated by GFI and CFI values of 0.90 or higher, and a  $\chi^2/df$  of less than 3 with a p-value greater than 0.05. RMSEA

Findings A number of checks were made to address possible problems with outliers,

normalcy, and missing data before the study started. Less than 2% of the dataset was missing, according to the analysis of missing data, and the expectation-maximization technique (EM) was used to address this. Skewness and kurtosis values were analyzed to evaluate the normalcy assumption, and both were found to be within the permissible range of  $\pm 2.0$ . This verified that the data distribution satisfied the normalcy requirements. Mahalanobis distance was used to identify univariate and multivariate outliers. Three examples were identified by the analysis as multivariate outliers; hence, these cases were eliminated from further research to guarantee the validity and robustness of the results.

The results of descriptive and correlation studies performed on the different constructs are shown in Table 1. The table shows a significant positive connection ( $r=0.60$ ,  $p$ ) between both emotion management and online instruction. The table's values show that digital leadership, emotional intelligence, and sustainable human resource management are positively correlated.

It means that if school leadership has digital knowledge and school teachers are emotionally intelligent it will leads to sustainability of human resource in school. Moreover, Digital burnout shows a negative relationship with digital leadership, Emotional intelligence and Sustainable HRM practices. This indicated that high level of digital burnout is linked to lower level of digital knowledge to school leaders, lower level of emotional intelligence and lack of awareness about sustainable HRM practices among school teachers.

**4.1 Descriptive analysis**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
Digital Leadership	3.51	0.63	1			
Emotional Intelligence	4.22	0.55	0.66	1		
Sustainable HRM	5.23	1.2	0.61	0.56	1	
Digital Burnout	2.6	0.52	-0.56	-0.55	-0.60	1

**4.2 Convergent validity and reliability of the constructs**

Table 3 displays the construct's composite reliability and convergent validity. When the construct's indicators account for at least 60% of its variability, the AVE score is equal to or greater than 0.6. indicators, indicating strong convergent validity. Additionally, significant reliability is indicated by a CR score of 0.7 or greater. According to the table, since each construct's AVE value is more than 0.6, they all have commendable convergent validity. With CR values more than 0.80, each construct also exhibits strong internal consistency, suggesting that the items within each construct accurately measure the same underlying notion.

Additionally, as shown in Table 4, the diagonal elements display the square root of AVE for each

construct, with values for emotion regulation, teacher burnout, teacher digital burnout, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher online teaching competency being 0.80, 0.78, 0.81, and 0.85, respectively. The shared variance between the indicators within each construct is measured by these numbers. Conversely, the correlation coefficients between the constructs are shown by the off-diagonal elements. The discriminant validity of the notions is empirically supported by the noteworthy fact that all off-diagonal items have values lower than the corresponding diagonal elements. The notion that the measurement model correctly differentiates between the various latent variables is supported by the implication that each construct is unique.

Constructs	AVE	Composite reliability
Digital Leadership	0.61	.86
Emotional Intelligence	0.62	0.90
Digital Burnout	0.56	0.85
Sustainable HR Practices	0.64	0.89

**4.3 Structural Model Results**

The PLS-SEM is used to test the relationships among Digital Leadership (DL), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Sustainable HRM Practices (SHR), and Digital Burnout (DB). The analysis examined direct effects, mediation effects, pathcoefficients ( $\beta$ ), t-values, and p-values, as well

as the explanatory power ( $R^2$ ) and model fit indices.

Table 1 presents the direct effects of DL and EI on SHR and DB, and the direct effect of SHR on DB. All direct effects were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), supporting the majority of the proposed hypotheses.

**Table 1. Direct Effects (Path Coefficients)**

Hypothesized Path	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value	Result
H1: DL → DB	-0.210	3.105	0.002	Supported
H2: EI → DB	-0.180	2.987	0.003	Supported
H3: DL → SHR	0.365	5.120	<0.001	Supported
H4: EI → SHR	0.298	4.098	<0.001	Supported
H7: SHR → DB	-0.275	4.212	<0.001	Supported

**4.3.1 Mediation Effects**

The mediating role of Sustainable HRM Practices (SHR) was tested using the bootstrapping method

(5,000 resamples). SHR was found to significantly mediate the relationships between DL and DB, and between EI and DB.

Table 2. Mediation Effects (Indirect Effects)

Hypothesized Mediation	Indirect Effect ( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value	Result
H5: DL → SHR → DB	-0.100	3.215	0.001	Supported
H6: EI → SHR → DB	-0.082	2.987	0.003	Supported

Sustainable HRM practices partially mediate the negative relationship between both Digital Leadership and Digital Burnout, as well as Emotional Intelligence and Digital Burnout. This indicates that effective sustainable HR practices enhance the buffering effects of leadership and

emotional intelligence on digital fatigue.

4.3.2 Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

The model explained a substantial proportion of variance in Sustainable HRM Practices and Digital Burnout:

Table 3.  $R^2$  Values

Endogenous Variable	$R^2$	Interpretation
SHR	0.48	Moderate explanatory power
DB	0.56	Moderate to substantial effect

4.3.3 Model Fit Indices

The overall fit of the structural model was assessed using standard PLS-SEM indices.

Table 4. Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Observed Value
SRMR	<0.08	0.062
NFI	>0.90	0.918
Chi <sup>2</sup> /df	<3	2.73
RMS_theta	<0.12	0.091

All indices meet the recommended thresholds, indicating **good overall fit**.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

With Sustainable HRM Practices (SHR) acting as a mediator, the current study looked at how Digital Leadership (DL) and Emotional Intelligence (EI) affected Digital Burnout (DB). The results offer important new information on how HR procedures, emotional intelligence, and leadership interact to reduce digital burnout in contemporary organizations like schools.

The findings demonstrated that Digital Leadership had a negative impact on Digital Burnout ( $\beta = -0.210, p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that lower levels of digital weariness are experienced by teachers and admin staff working in public and private schools under successful digital leadership (Karakose, 2023). Furthermore, school

staff's stress and burnout can be decreased by leaders who strategically direct digital transition, offer clarity in digital responsibilities, and promote balanced technology use (Lin, 2025).

These results are in line with earlier research by Quaquebeke (2023) and Lin (2025), which emphasizes the protective function of leadership in workplaces that rely heavily on technology. These studies also revealed the immediate effects of digital leadership on HR procedures and workers' mental health, such as a decrease in tech stress.

Emotional Intelligence also negatively predicts Digital Burnout ( $\beta = -0.180, p < 0.01$ ). Higher emotional intelligence employees are less likely to

burn out because they can better control their emotions, handle stress, and traverse challenging digital environments. These findings are consistent with those of Zheng (2025) and Shaban (2025), which show that emotional intelligence (EI) functions as a personal resource that protects against work-related stressors, especially in digitalized workplaces.

DL significantly improved SHRM practices, according to the study ( $\beta = 0.365$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Leaders who place a high priority on digital transformation are more likely to adopt HR strategies that promote sustainability, like well-being initiatives, flexible work schedules, and the development of digital skills. This result is in line with the findings of Inceoglu (2018) and Qiao (2024), who highlight the critical role that transformational and digital leaders play in coordinating HR strategies with organizational objectives.

SHRM practices are positively impacted by EI ( $\beta = 0.298$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Higher emotional competency levels among teachers and admin staff increase the likelihood that they will support long-term HR efforts that encourage engagement, wellbeing, and a decrease in burnout (Soares, 2024).

These findings further support Roy's (2025) claim that emotionally intelligent people improve HR efficacy and organizational atmosphere.

The connections between DL  $\rightarrow$  DB ( $\beta = -0.100$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and EI  $\rightarrow$  DB ( $\beta = -0.082$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) are partially mediated by sustainable HRM practices. This suggests that leadership and emotional intelligence lessen digital burnout through sustainable HRM strategies. For example, workload management, flexible scheduling, and digital well-being initiatives are examples of sustainable HR practices that mitigate the pressures of digital work. The work of Guest (2017) and Jabbour et al. (2019), who highlight the mediation function of HR practices in connecting leadership and employee outcomes, is expanded upon by these findings.

The significance of sustainable HR activities in lowering burnout is highlighted by the direct negative impact of SHR on DB ( $\beta = -0.275$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Schools that adopt policies that support

employee autonomy, work-life balance, and ongoing learning are better able to reduce digital weariness. This is consistent with studies by Huang et al. (2020) and Sharma et al. (2021) on the importance of HR procedures as preventative measures against workplace burnout.

This study examined the impact of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Digital Leadership (DL) on Digital Burnout (DB), emphasizing the mediating function of Sustainable HRM Practices (SHR). The results support the idea that emotional intelligence and leadership are essential tools for lowering digital fatigue in contemporary businesses. In addition to immediately reducing digital burnout, sustainable HRM practices serve as a channel via which DL and EI result in enhanced worker wellbeing. By combining leadership, emotional intelligence, HRM, and burnout into a single structural model, the study advances theory by expanding the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework to include digital workplaces. Empirically, it highlights the significance of organizational interventions in utilizing human and leadership resources to counteract digital stress and illustrates the partial mediation impact of SHR.

Practically speaking, companies should make investments in the development of digital leadership skills, cultivate emotional intelligence, and put in place long-term HRM strategies including flexible work schedules, ongoing education, and wellness initiatives. In increasingly digitalized workplaces, these strategies can successfully lower digital burnout, boost worker resilience, and increase overall productivity.

Lastly, although this study offers insightful information, it also identifies opportunities for further research to better generalize and validate the model, such as longitudinal designs, multi-source data gathering, and cross-cultural studies.

### 5.1 Theoretical Implications

The study offers a comprehensive view of digital work environments by combining Digital Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Sustainable HRM, and Digital Burnout into a unified SEM framework. By demonstrating how sustainable

practices transfer leadership and emotional competencies into employee well-being, it empirically verifies SHR as a mediating mechanism and advances HRM and organizational behavior theory. By adding digital leadership and emotional intelligence as essential resources that lower burnout through HRM interventions, the study expands on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) paradigm.

As for as the Practical research implications are for Leaders: By implementing sustainable HR practices, investing in digital leadership training can both directly lower digital fatigue and indirectly increase employee engagement. For HR managers: To reduce digital fatigue and promote employee resilience, it is essential to implement well-thought-out sustainable HRM practices (flexible work, training, and well-being initiatives). Regarding Policymakers: In increasingly digital workplaces, encouraging companies to implement policies that incorporate leadership development, emotional intelligence training, and sustainable HR practices can enhance organizational productivity and employee well-being.

Cross-sectional design: The study records relationships at one particular moment in time; causation could be investigated by longitudinal research. Self-reported data: Multi-source data is advised for future research, as responses may be prone to common method bias. Cultural context: Because the study was carried out in a particular organization or nation, its findings might not apply to other countries. Scope of constructs: Future studies should examine additional factors that may contribute to the explanation of digital burnout, such as organizational culture or technology acceptance.

### Reference

- Erten P, Özdemir O. The Digital Burnout Scale Development Study. *Inonu University Journal of the Faculty of Education*. 2020;21(2):668-83. <https://doi.org/10.17679/inuefd.597890>
- Shin, J., Mollah, M. A., & Choi, J. (2023). Sustainability and organizational performance in South Korea: The effect of digital leadership on digital culture and employees' digital capabilities. *Sustainability*, 15(3), 2027.
- Erhan, T.; Uzunbacak, H.H.; Aydin, E. From Conventional to Digital Leadership: Exploring Digitalization of Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior. *Manag. Res. Rev.* 2022, 45, 1524-1543.
- Ulutaş, M.; Arslan, H. Bilişim Liderliği Ölçeği: Bir Ölçek Geliştirme Çalışması. *Marmara Üniversitesi Atatürk Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Bilim. Dergisi*. 2018, 47, 105-124
- Akram, A. M. (2021). Comparative review on information and communication technology issues in education sector of developed and developing countries: a case study about Pakistan. *Bulletin of Electrical Engineering and Informatics*, 10(6), 3489-3500.
- Anwar, S. U. (2025). Unveiling the role of emotional intelligence as a mediator between digital leadership and employee cynicism: a study in the private higher educational institutes. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 33(5), 1180-1202.
- Bayighomog, S. W. (2022). Reviving employees' essence of hospitality through spiritual wellbeing, spiritual leadership, and emotional intelligence. *Tourism Management*, 89, 104406.
- Cheng, H. Y. (2023). An integrative review on job burnout among teachers in China: Implications for Human Resource Management. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 34(3), 529-561.
- Ehnert, I. S.-C. (88-108). Reporting on sustainability and HRM: A comparative study of sustainability reporting practices by the world's largest companies. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(1), 2016.

- Ertiö, T. T. (2024). The role of digital leaders' emotional intelligence in mitigating employee technostress. *Business Horizons*, 67(4), 399-409.
- Ertiö, T. T. (2024). The role of digital leaders' emotional intelligence in mitigating employee technostress. *Business Horizons*, 67(4), 399-409.
- Glandorf, H. L.-H. (2025). Mental and physical health outcomes of burnout in athletes: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 18(1), 372-416.
- Goleman, D. (2001). An EI-based theory of performance." The emotionally intelligent workplace: How to select for, measure, and improve emotional intelligence in individuals, groups, and organizations. *eiconsortium.org*, 1(1), 27-44.
- Guest, D. E. (2017). Human resource management and employee well-being: Towards a new analytic framework. *Human resource management journal*, 27(1), 22-38.
- Inceoglu, I. G. (2018). Leadership behavior and employee well-being: An integrated review and a future research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 29(1), 179-202.
- Jackson, S. E. (2014). An aspirational framework for strategic human resource management. *Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1), 1-56.
- Karakose, T. a. (2023). Digital leadership and sustainable school improvement—a conceptual analysis and implications for future research. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 12(1), 7-18.
- Landy, F. J. (2005). Some historical and scientific issues related to research on emotional intelligence. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(4), 411-424.
- Lee, H. J. (2018). How emotional intelligence relates to job satisfaction and burnout in public service jobs. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 84(4), 729-745.
- Li, Z. a. (2025). Technology in education: Addressing legal and governance challenges in the digital era. *Education and Information Technologies*, 30(7), 8413-8443.
- Lin, Q. (2025). Digital leadership: a systematic literature review and future research agenda. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 28(6), 2469-2488.
- Lin, Q. (2025). Digital leadership: a systematic literature review and future research agenda. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 28(6), 2469-2488.
- Loor, G. M. (2021). The Impact Systems Design and Leadership Practices Have on Technology Integration and Adaptation at the K-12 School Level during a Time of Change. *St. John's University (New York)*.
- Manzoor, F. L. (2019). An examination of sustainable HRM practices on job performance: An application of training as a moderator. *Sustainability*, 11(8), 2263.
- Maslach, C. a. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 2(2), 99-113.
- Mayer, J. D. (1995). Emotional intelligence and the construction and regulation of feelings. *Applied and preventive psychology*, 4(3), 197-208.
- Miao, C. R. (2017). A meta-analysis of emotional intelligence and work attitudes. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, 90(2), 177-202.
- Mushtaque, I. H.-E.-Y. (2022). The effect of technostress on the teachers' willingness to use online teaching modes and the moderating role of job insecurity during COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 36(1), 63-80.
- Nakra, N. a. (2025). Responsible leadership and organizational sustainability performance: investigating the mediating role of sustainable HRM. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 74(2), 409-426.
- Nica, E. Ş.-M. (2024). The Critical Role of Human Resources in Mitigating and Managing Cybersecurity Risks in Modern Organizations: A Strategic Approach. *Psychosociological Issues in Human Resource Management*, 12(2), 0-0.

- Paudel, N. R.-H. (2025). Effect of a mindfulness-based cognitive behavior therapy intervention on occupational burnout among school teachers. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 15, 1496205.
- Perveen, Y. A. (2025). Burnout and Beyond: Exploring How Work Environment, Self-Efficacy, and Emotional Exhaustion and Job Security Drive Quitting Intentions Among Newly Recruited Teachers in Sindh, Pakistan. *Psychology in the Schools*.
- Qiao, G. Y. (2024). The strategic role of digital transformation: Leveraging digital leadership to enhance employee performance and organizational commitment in the digital era. *Systems*, 12(11), 457.
- Quaquebeke, N. V. (2023). The now, new, and next of digital leadership: How Artificial Intelligence (AI) will take over and change leadership as we know it. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 30(3), 265-275.
- Ramgolam, G. N. (2025). Sustainable human resource management—a systematic literature review and directions for future research. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 16(3), 11407-11444.
- Roy, A. (2025). Sustainability through E-HRM: A Psychological Perspective." In Sustainability and Sustainable Development. *Apple Academic Press*, 175-190.
- Shaban, M. M. (2025). The mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between technostress and burnout prevention among critical care nurses a structural equation modelling approach. *BMC nursing*, 24(1), 255.
- Shaban, M. M. (2025). The mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between technostress and burnout prevention among critical care nurses a structural equation modelling approach. *BMC nursing*, 24(1), 255.
- Shaban, M. M. (2025). The mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between technostress and burnout prevention among critical care nurses a structural equation modelling approach. *BMC nursing*, 24(1), 255.
- Siddiqui, S. I. (2023). Technostress: A catalyst to leave the teaching profession-A survey designed to measure technostress among teachers in Pakistan during COVID-19 pandemic. *Elearning and Digital Media*, 20(1), 53-79.
- Skaalvik, E. M. (2020). Teacher burnout: relations between dimensions of burnout, perceived school context, job satisfaction and motivation for teaching. A longitudinal study. *Teachers and Teaching*, 26(7-8), 602-616.
- Soares, A. R. (2024). Integration of Team Performance, Emotional Intelligence, and Human Resource Management Practices: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Asian Business and Management*, 3(4), 425-442.
- Stankevičiūtė, Ž. a. (2018). Raising the curtain in people management by exploring how sustainable HRM translates to practice: The case of Lithuanian organizations. *Sustainability*, 10(12), 4356.
- Tarsuslu, S. F. (2025). Can digital leadership transform AI anxiety and attitude in nurses. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 57(1), 28-38.
- Tigre, F. B. (2025). The digital leadership emerging construct: a multi-method approach. *Management Review Quarterly*, 75(1), 789-836.
- Wong, C. S. (2002). The effects of leader and follower emotional intelligence on performance and attitude. *An exploratory study. Leadersh Q*, 13(3), 243-274.
- Wu, W. J. (2025). Theoretical Exploration of Sustainable Human Resource Management Systems: A Corporate Social Responsibility Perspective. *Systems*, 13(11), 980.

Zheng, J. H. (2025). Impact of Mindfulness, Emotional Intelligence, and Employee Well-being on Mental Healthcare of Workers' Affectiveness: The Mediating Role of Employee Satisfaction and the Moderating Effect of Digital Leadership. *Health Care Analysis*, 1-33.

Zia, A. M. (2025). Digital job resources, digital engagement, digital leadership, and innovative work behaviour: a serial mediation model. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 28(8), 3192-3216.

