

Digitalization and Employee Quality of Life: A Review

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Abstract

This review examines the implications of digitalization and remote work for employee quality of life (QoL), synthesizing evidence across physical, psychological, independence, social, environmental, safety and resource, and spiritual domains. A comprehensive review of multidisciplinary literature was conducted to evaluate the opportunities, challenges, and contextual factors associated with remote and hybrid work arrangements. Evidence from organizational, technological, occupational health, and well-being studies was integrated to develop a multidimensional understanding of QoL outcomes. The review indicates that digitalization and remote work can enhance autonomy, flexibility, work–life balance, and opportunities for personal and spiritual well-being. However, benefits are often offset by risks such as social isolation, blurred work–home boundaries, ergonomic challenges, cybersecurity concerns, and unequal access to digital resources. Outcomes vary according to individual, organizational, cultural, household, and technological factors, highlighting substantial heterogeneity in employee experiences. This review proposes a holistic framework linking remote work characteristics to multiple QoL domains and identifies critical research gaps, particularly in underrepresented contexts such as Nepal and South Asia. The findings emphasize the need for longitudinal, context-sensitive research and evidence-based policies that promote equitable, sustainable, and employee-centered digital work environments.

Keywords: digitalization, remote work, telework, quality of life, employee well-being, hybrid work.

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Introduction

Nepal's accelerating digitalization is reshaping work arrangements and is expected to significantly influence labour markets in the coming decades. The expansion of information and communication technologies (ICTs), digital education systems, broadband connectivity, cloud-based collaboration platforms, and artificial intelligence applications has increased the feasibility of remote work arrangements, including

telework, telecommuting, homeworking, work-from-home (WFH), and work-from-anywhere (WFA) models (Mishra, 2023a; Mishra, 2024; Mishra et al., 2025). Recent developments in Nepal's academic and organizational sectors demonstrate growing digital transformation through digital academic operations, virtual learning environments, and technology-enabled management systems, creating foundations for wider adoption of flexible work practices (Mishra, 2022; Mishra, 2023a; Mishra & Ananda, 2022). Similarly, emerging Industry 4.0 initiatives and virtual operational models indicate that digital technologies are increasingly becoming integral to Nepal's economic and organizational development (Mishra & Aithal, 2022). As digital infrastructure, technological literacy, and human capital continue to improve, telework opportunities are likely to expand beyond the information technology sector and become a sustained feature of Nepal's employment landscape (Mishra, 2023b).

Quality of life (QoL), defined by the World Health Organization as an individual's perception of their position in life within the context of culture, value systems, personal goals, expectations, and concerns, represents a critical metric for evaluating the long-term success of emerging work models. In Nepal, where urban congestion, transportation limitations, and geographical barriers can affect workplace accessibility, digital work arrangements may offer additional advantages by reducing travel requirements and expanding employment opportunities across regions (Mishra & Magar, 2017). Therefore, organizations must establish policies that support healthy boundary management and employee well-being.

The long-term effects of remote work on job satisfaction and employee well-being will

depend largely on how organizations utilize digital technologies and redesign work processes. Evidence suggests that telework can improve job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and motivation when supported by effective leadership, trust-based management, and adequate technological resources (Demerouti et al., 2014). At the same time, reduced face-to-face interaction may weaken social capital and workplace cohesion if organizations fail to maintain opportunities for collaboration and informal communication (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). As Nepal continues investing in human capital development and digital transformation, organizations will need to complement technological adoption with strategies that foster employee engagement, teamwork, mentoring, and social support (Mishra, 2023b; Mishra et al., 2025).

Digitalization will also influence employees' physical and psychological quality of life. Remote work can facilitate healthier lifestyles by reducing commuting time and providing flexibility for exercise, family responsibilities, and personal development. Nepalese studies on laptop use and technology adoption indicate the growing importance of digital devices in daily work and educational activities, emphasizing the need to address ergonomic risks and promote healthy technology use practices (Mishra et al., 2021; Mishra & Aithal, 2021). Furthermore, lessons from occupational safety research highlight the importance of proactively identifying and mitigating workplace hazards, whether in traditional workplaces or emerging digital work environments (Lama et al., 2019; Maskey & Mishra, 2018). Consequently, organizations should integrate ergonomics guidance, mental-health resources, workload management policies, and digital well-being initiatives into remote work strategies.

The future trajectory of remote work in Nepal will depend primarily on investments in digital infrastructure, human capital, institutional readiness, and supportive policy frameworks. Although remote work was previously concentrated within a limited number of sectors, expanding internet access, digital literacy initiatives, and technology-enabled education systems are creating conditions for broader adoption (Mishra, 2022; Mishra, 2023a). Continued investment in broadband connectivity, reliable electricity, digital skills development, and organizational capability building will be essential to ensuring equitable access to remote work opportunities. At the policy level, labour regulations must evolve to address occupational safety, data security, employee privacy, and worker protections in digitally mediated work environments. Nepal's broader digital transformation agenda—including advances in education, management, innovation, and Industry 4.0 applications—provides a strategic opportunity to promote inclusive productivity growth while enhancing employees' quality of life (Mishra & Aithal, 2022; Mishra, 2024).

Overall, digitalization presents significant opportunities to transform work and improve employee well-being in Nepal. However, the realization of these benefits will depend on evidence-based organizational practices, investment in human capital, equitable access to technology, and policies that ensure the gains from digital transformation are broadly shared across sectors, regions, and demographic groups. By aligning technological innovation with employee well-being objectives, Nepal can leverage digitalization not only to enhance productivity but also to promote sustainable improvements in quality of life (Mishra & Acharya, 2018; Mishra, 2018).

Research Objective

This review article aims to critically examine and synthesize existing literature on how digitalization influences employees' quality of life. It identifies both the beneficial outcomes of workplace digital transformation, such as improved work-life balance, greater flexibility, and reduced workload, and the potential challenges it creates, including digital stress, privacy concerns, and job insecurity.

Methodology

This study adopts a systematic mixed methods literature review (integrative/systematic review) to synthesize empirical and theoretical evidence on how digitalization and remote work influence employees' long term quality of life in Nepal and comparable contexts. The review combines quantitative synthesis of empirical findings with qualitative thematic analysis of conceptual and policy literature to identify patterns, gaps, and policy relevant recommendations.

Search Strategy

Databases

Search will cover multidisciplinary bibliographic databases including regional databases (NepJOL). Grey literature (reports, policy briefs, government documents) will be searched via Google Scholar, institutional repositories (ADB, World Bank, ILO), and national sources (Nepal Government, central bank, relevant ministries).

Students of Bachelor 5th Semester were assigned to review papers differently and discuss and write review as part of learning at Madhesh University.

Search Terms

Combined keywords and controlled vocabulary (Boolean operators) will be

used as “remote work” OR “telework” OR “telecommute” OR “work from home” OR “work from anywhere” OR “hybrid work”) AND (“quality of life” OR “well being” OR “work–life balance” OR “job satisfaction” OR “mental health” OR “physical health” OR “social relationships” OR “spiritual well being”) AND (Nepal OR “South Asia” OR developing OR “low income” OR “middle income”). Search strings will be adapted per free access database in single search as pdf.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion

Empirical studies after group discussion in presence of faculty were only considered.

Exclusion

Studies focusing exclusively on technical aspects of ICT without human outcomes, opinion pieces lacking empirical or conceptual contribution, conference abstracts without full text, and studies not accessible in full text after reasonable efforts.

Study Selection

Screening process: Titles and abstracts will be screened independently by two reviewers against inclusion criteria. Full texts of potentially relevant papers were retrieved and assessed independently by the same reviewers. Discrepancies will be resolved through discussion.

PRISMA Flow

The selection process were documented using a PRISMA flow diagram (records identified, screened, eligible, and included).

Data Extraction

A structured data extraction form will be developed and piloted. Extracted information will include: bibliographic details, study setting and population, study design and sample size,

remote work characteristics (type, duration, degree of digitalization), QoL domains examined (physical, psychological, social, independence, environment, spiritual, main findings, effect sizes or qualitative themes, identified moderators/mediators, and policy/practice recommendations.

Extraction will be performed by one reviewer group and checked by a second reviewer for accuracy.

Ethical Considerations

This review uses published and publicly available data and does not require primary data ethics approval. Stakeholder consultations will be conducted with informed consent, and any primary data from consultations will be stored securely and reported anonymously.

Timeline

Estimated completion: 5–7 months from protocol approval (1 month protocol and search strategy finalization; 2 months screening and extraction; 1 month appraisal and synthesis; 1 month stakeholder consultation and revision; 1 month manuscript and brief preparation).

Limitations

Potential limitations include language bias (English predominance), heterogeneity of measures that may constrain quantitative synthesis, and variable availability of Nepal specific empirical studies. These limitations will be explicitly acknowledged and addressed in the interpretation of findings.

Literature Review

Digital technologies have enabled synchronous and asynchronous activities to be distributed among employees at remote locations (Herschel & Andrews, 1997). Remote arrangements are likewise framed as ways for employees to accommodate household

responsibilities and reduce commuting costs by working from home or satellite offices (Nickson & Siddons, 2012). By permitting flexibility in the spatial locus of tasks, organizations have adapted work arrangements to changing environmental and labour demands (Igarria & Guimaraes, 1999).

Organizational Gains from Information Technologies

Computers and computer networks have enabled organizations to achieve substantial productivity and efficiency gains amid broader restructuring trends such as downsizing, outsourcing, and the rise of contingent workforces. Business process redesign and re engineering are founded on the premise that technology enables fundamental changes in organizational forms and processes (Herschel & Andrews, 1997). At the same time, technological diffusion has raised normative and legal questions—freedom of expression, intellectual property, and democratic access—because digital channels expand the reach and speed of information dissemination in ways previously impossible.

Defining Telework and Its Consequences

Telecommuting (telework) denotes an alternative work arrangement in which employees perform tasks remotely—outside the primary workplace—for some portion of their schedules, using electronic media to interact with organizational and external stakeholders (Feldman & Gainey, 1997). Telework involves a substitution of place that creates physical and psychological distance, potentially restricting informal interactions and changing patterns of supervision and collaboration (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Telework in the Modern Context

Estimating the prevalence of telework is methodologically challenging because

teleworkers often occupy nonstandard employment statuses (e.g., contractors) and because definitions and sampling methods vary across studies (Kraut, 1989). Time series data from consistent sources are therefore most informative. For example, Cyber Dialogue reported 11.5 million U.S. teleworkers in 1999—a modest increase over 1998—and a near equal gender distribution (51% women, 49% men) with a typical teleworker age of 42 and median household income of US\$45,200 (Cyber Dialogue, 1999; International Telework Association and Council, 2000). These figures align with earlier consulting findings and regional samples (Mokhtarian & Salomon, 1996).

However, demographic profiles vary across contexts and studies. A California pilot found 65% male participants, primarily mid level professionals (Olszewski & Mokhtarian, 1994), while Finnish surveys describe telecommuters as predominantly high income, highly educated men in independent professional roles (Luukinen, 1996). These differences reflect heterogeneity in telework adoption across sectors, occupations, and national labour-market structures.

Motivations for Telework

Research into telework motivations examines both employee level drivers (demand) and organizational incentives (supply). Employee motives include balancing paid work with household and caregiving responsibilities and avoiding commuting burdens. The literature has historically emphasized demand side factors, but supply side drivers warrant deeper inquiry given their role in shaping organizational adoption and design.

Origins and the Role of Commute Reduction

Telework's rise in the 1970s was partly a response to energy and transportation crises that

heightened concern over gasoline consumption, long commutes, and urban congestion. Consequently, early research emphasized commute related variables—commute time, distance, and stress—as key determinants of telework preference and frequency. Yet empirical evidence has been mixed. Several large scale models found that neither commute time nor distance robustly predicts telework preference or frequency (Mokhtarian & Salomon, 1996; Mannering & Mokhtarian, 1995). Some studies report that teleworkers have longer commutes on average (Mannering & Mokhtarian, 1995), but overall, commute reduction has not proven the dominant motive for telework in many settings (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

Physical Domain

Physical health is a core component of overall quality of life (QoL). A robust physical state affects individuals' capacity to perform daily tasks, pursue goals, and experience subjective well being; empirical studies consistently show positive associations between better physical health and higher life satisfaction. Longitudinal evidence among older adults, for example, links sustained physical functioning with improved well being and life satisfaction (Smith et al., 20XX). The physical domain therefore encompasses multiple interrelated dimensions—functional limitations and disability, physical activity and lifestyle, ergonomics, and environmental determinants of health—that jointly shape QoL.

Functional Limitations and Disability

Functional limitations and disability exert substantial influence on physical QoL. Studies show that individuals with fewer functional impairments consistently report higher QoL than those with greater limitations, underscoring the value of interventions that maintain or

restore function. Chronic pain and persistent symptoms are also major determinants of reduced physical well being. Research on pain management—particularly among patients with long term conditions such as cancer—demonstrates that comprehensive pain control strategies can materially improve physical QoL. Thus, assessment and targeted management of functional limitations and pain are central to improving physical domain outcomes.

Physical Activity, Lifestyle, and Ergonomics

Regular physical activity and healthy lifestyle behaviours are key positive drivers of physical QoL and also confer mental health benefits. Population and cohort studies indicate that consistent exercise is associated with higher life satisfaction and overall QoL (Williams et al., 2008). Lifestyle factors—nutrition, sleep, substance use—further modulate physical functioning and well being.

Ergonomics occupies an important interface between work design and physical health. Poor ergonomic conditions increase the risk of musculoskeletal disorders, fatigue, and reduced productivity; conversely, ergonomically designed workspaces and equipment mitigate strain and improve comfort. In contemporary work contexts—especially with the rise of remote and hybrid arrangements—ergonomic supports (e.g., guidance, equipment provision, workstation assessments) are essential to sustain employees' physical QoL over time.

Environmental and Service Determinants

Broader environmental conditions and access to health services shape the physical domain. Availability of primary and specialised healthcare, clean air and water, safe neighbourhoods, and accessible recreational spaces all contribute to physical well being. Structural inequities in these determinants

translate into disparities in physical QoL across populations. Research emphasises integrating environmental assessments into QoL measurement and policy planning to address upstream factors that affect physical health.

Psychological Domain

The psychological domain encompasses affective states, cognitive functioning, and subjective well being; it is central to overall quality of life (QoL). Psychological health is shaped by individual characteristics (e.g., resilience, coping skills), work conditions (e.g., job demands, social support), and broader social and technological contexts (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Psychological Distress

Research across occupational settings demonstrates that elevated job demands, role ambiguity, and perceived job insecurity are associated with increased distress and reduced life satisfaction (Feldman & Gainey, 1997). Measurement approaches vary, but the consistent pattern underscores the need for early detection and targeted interventions to protect psychological well being.

Emotional Recovery and Resilience

Emotional recovery—an individual's capacity to recover from negative affective states—and broader resilience processes moderate the impact of stressors on QoL (Baruch & Nicholson, 2020). Individuals with high emotional recovery exhibit faster affective regulation, lower risk of depression or somatization, and better maintenance of QoL under stress. The literature suggests moderation effects whereby emotional recovery attenuates the negative association between psychological distress and QoL: when recovery capacity is high, distress has a weaker effect on QoL, and vice versa. Conceptually, this aligns with resilience

and stress buffering frameworks; empirically, further longitudinal work is required to specify causal pathways and to identify mechanisms (e.g., cognitive reappraisal, social support) that strengthen recovery.

Occupational Stress and Role Pressures

Occupational stress—arising from excessive demands, poor job fit, role overload, and low control—is a pervasive determinant of psychological QoL. Meta analytic and field studies demonstrate robust negative links between job stress and outcomes such as absenteeism, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction (Feldman & Gainey, 1997; Simin Bemana et al., 2013). Demographic moderators (age, gender, tenure, education) and organizational factors (supervisory support, clarity of role expectations) shape stress prevalence and severity). Advances in stress measurement using wearable sensors and behavioural data offer promising avenues to distinguish eustress from distress and to develop real time interventions (Li et al., 2016).

Remote Work, Social Isolation, and Boundary Management

Remote and hybrid work arrangements alter work patterns and psychosocial exposures in ways that can both improve and harm psychological QoL. Benefits reported include greater schedule autonomy, reduced commuting stress, and increased work–life fit for some employees. Risks include social isolation, weakened informal support networks, blurred work–home boundaries, and perceptions of job insecurity—each linked to higher psychological distress and lower QoL (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Heterogeneity in outcomes reflects variation in job type, home conditions, managerial practices, and individual coping resources.

Differential Vulnerability

Certain worker groups are more vulnerable to psychological harms: frontline workers facing

high occupational risk; individuals with pre existing mental health conditions; caregivers balancing multiple roles; and employees in precarious employment (Cheng et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Intersectional factors (gender, socioeconomic status, caregiving responsibilities) further condition risk and recovery trajectories. This heterogeneity indicates the need for targeted support policies rather than one size fits all interventions.

Below is a revised, academic-style literature review for sections 2.1–2.4. I removed repetitive pandemic emphasis, sharpened structure and language, corrected flow, and highlighted key findings and gaps for future research. Citations you provided are preserved but formatted diffusely; please replace placeholders (year/volume/pages) with exact references to match your target journal style.

Level of Independence

Level of independence refers to the degree to which employees can plan, execute, and supervise their tasks without direct supervision. Independence is both an individual resource (autonomy, self efficacy) and an organizational attribute (task design, managerial trust) that influences job performance, motivation, and quality of life (QoL).

Effects of Flexible and Remote Work Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements, enabled by digitalization, alter autonomy in complex ways. Remote and hybrid work often increase temporal and spatial autonomy, allowing employees to schedule tasks and integrate work with nonwork responsibilities. Greater autonomy is associated with improved job satisfaction, perceived control, and work–life fit when accompanied by role clarity and adequate resources.

Conversely, independence may be undermined by weak communication infrastructures, limited access to information, or managerial practices that substitute physical oversight with intensified electronic monitoring. Isolation and diminished informal coordination can reduce employees' perceived competence and decision latitude (Baruch & Nicholson, 2020). Variations in occupational tasks matter: knowledge workers often benefit more from autonomy than routine or interdependent roles where coordination and resource access constrain independence.

Access to Resources and Digital Readiness

Independence depends on employees' access to digital tools, stable connectivity, and supportive IT infrastructures. Where resources are adequate, digital technologies can enhance self directed work through asynchronous collaboration, cloud platforms, and process automation. Where resources are lacking, employees experience constrained autonomy and increased dependence on institutional supports, which can reduce QoL and productivity.

Social Relationships

Social relationships at work comprise formal ties (task teams, supervision) and informal ties (peer support, collegial friendship). These relationships contribute to belonging, social capital, and psychological and instrumental support—key determinants of QoL.

Digital Mediation of Workplace Sociality

Digital collaboration tools foster communication across distance but reconfigure the quality and frequency of social interactions. Virtual channels can preserve task coordination and enable geographically dispersed teams; however, they may attenuate incidental interactions that underpin trust, mentoring, and collective identity (Baruch & Nicholson, 2020).

Empirical findings show mixed outcomes: some workers report maintained or even enhanced professional networks via digital platforms; others experience weakened relational ties and loneliness.

Family and Nonwork Relationships

Work arrangements influence family dynamics and friendships through boundary permeability. Increased temporal flexibility can facilitate caregiving or family engagement, yet blurred boundaries can also produce spillover stress that strains household relationships. The net effect depends on household composition, role expectations, and institutional supports such as flexible scheduling policies.

Vulnerable Groups and Equity Considerations

Marginalized workers—those with precarious employment, limited digital literacy, or caregiving burdens—face disproportionate risks to social capital. Research should examine intersectional vulnerabilities and design targeted supports (peer networks, mentoring programs, facilitated social rituals) to sustain relational resources.

Environment Domain

The environment domain encompasses physical, social, and cultural conditions that shape employees' capacity to work and their quality of life in digitally mediated contexts.

Physical Environment

Home and satellite workspaces vary widely in adequacy. Advantages include greater control over ambient conditions and time saved from commuting (Kossek & Lautsch, 2017). Risks include suboptimal ergonomics, inadequate equipment, and household distractions that impair concentration and increase musculoskeletal and stress-related risks. Organizational provisions (stipends for furniture, virtual ergonomic assessments) can mitigate these risks.

Social Environment

The social environment of work comprises peer networks, supervisory relations, and organizational culture. Remote work reshapes these dynamics: frequent structured virtual meetings can sustain task coordination; however, the reduction of ad hoc interactions can weaken social norms and belonging. Effective practices include hybrid in person touchpoints, formalized mentoring, and norms for inclusive virtual meetings.

Cultural Environment

Organizational and national cultures influence acceptance of remote work. In contexts where presenteeism and face to face visibility are highly valued (as in many traditional office cultures), remote work may clash with expectations and hinder adoption. Cultural change—through leadership signaling, revised performance metrics, and explicit remote work norms—is necessary for sustainable digitalization.

Implications for Equity

Digitalization can both reduce and exacerbate inequalities. Employees with adequate homes, devices, and connectivity gain flexibility; those without face exclusion. Policies addressing the digital divide (equipment subsidies, broadband expansion, digital literacy programs) are prerequisites for equitable remote work.

Physical Safety, Security and Resources

This section covers safety (physical and psychosocial), information security, and material/financial resources affecting QoL.

Physical Safety and Ergonomics

Remote work typically reduces commute related physical risks and exposure to workplace hazards. Simultaneously, prolonged home

computer use raises ergonomic and sedentary behavior concerns, increasing musculoskeletal strain and chronic-health risks. Organizational policies for equipment provision, ergonomic training, and scheduled movement breaks are evidenced approaches to reduce such risks.

Information Security and Privacy

Distributed work increases cyber security exposure: home networks, personal devices, and dispersed data access broaden attack surfaces. Security lapses can have profound professional and psychological consequences for employees and organizations. Investment in secure collaboration platforms, employee cyber training, and clear data handling protocols are essential safeguards.

Financial and Material Resources

Remote work affects employees' finances heterogeneously. Savings arise from reduced commuting and location flexibility (potential lower housing costs); costs include home-office setup, utility expenses, and potential loss of employer provided amenities or benefits. These shifts can influence long term financial security and access to health services. Organizations should consider equitable compensation or stipends and review benefits portability for remote staff.

Health and Social Care Delivery

Digitalization facilitates telehealth and remote delivery of social services, improving access for some populations. Nonetheless, tele delivery can reduce the intensity of interpersonal care and may deepen inequities where digital access is limited. Workforce supports should address standards for remote care, workload management, and supervision.

Below is a tightened, academic-style literature review of the Spiritual Domain for a review paper. I remove repetitive pandemic

emphasis, improve structure and clarity, align concepts with QoL literature, and flag gaps for future research. Replace placeholder years/details with exact citations as needed for your target journal.

Spiritual Domain

The spiritual domain encompasses sources of meaning, purpose, connectedness, and transcendence that contribute to subjective well being and overall quality of life (QoL). Spirituality is broader than formal religiosity: it includes personal beliefs, values, existential meaning, and practices (e.g., prayer, meditation, ritual, reflective activities) that help individuals interpret life events and cope with stress.

Spirituality, Autonomy, and Temporal Flexibility

Digitalization and flexible work arrangements alter daily rhythms and time use, which can create opportunities for integrating spiritual practices into work-life routines. Employees with greater temporal autonomy may allocate time for meditation, prayer, or reflective pauses during the day—practices that support emotional regulation and sense of purpose (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Such integration may enhance QoL when employees can deliberately schedule restorative activities without role conflict.

Social Dimensions of Spiritual Practice

Many spiritual activities involve communal interaction (e.g., congregational worship, group meditation, religious study). Remote and distributed work change the topology of social interaction: on one hand, virtual platforms and asynchronous schedules can enable participation in distant religious services or online spiritual groups; on the other, the reduction of in person communal contact may deprive individuals of

embodied rituals and informal social support that sustain spiritual belonging (Luukinen, 1996; Baruch & Nicholson, 2020). Thus, the net effect on spiritual connectedness depends on the availability and quality of virtual alternatives and on personal preferences for communal versus solitary practice.

Spirituality as a Coping and Resilience Resource

Spirituality functions as a psychological resource that buffers stress and enhances coping. Empirical studies link higher spiritual well being with lower psychological distress and better adaptation following life disruptions (Poudel et al., 2020). In organizational contexts, employees who experience work as meaningful or vocationally significant often report higher engagement and resilience in the face of job changes (Feldman & Gainey, 1997). Spiritual frameworks—whether religious or secular—may therefore moderate the relationship between occupational stressors (e.g., isolation, role ambiguity) and QoL.

Mindfulness, Contemplative Practices, and Workplace Interventions

Mindfulness and related contemplative practices are frequently studied secular correlates of spiritual well being. For remote workers, digitally delivered mindfulness programs can be scalable tools to foster inner resources that complement social and organizational supports.

Contextual and Equity Considerations in Nepal

Cultural norms in Nepal—where collectivist values and religious practices are prominent—may shape how employees experience spiritual well being in remote work arrangements. Access to digital platforms for communal rituals, household responsibilities, and gendered role expectations can influence the extent to which

remote work supports or undermines spiritual practices. Intersectional factors (gender, caste, socioeconomic status, urban/rural residence) must therefore be considered when assessing spiritual QoL in Nepalese contexts.

Remote Work and Quality of Life

Remote work reconfigures the conditions of employment in ways that bear directly on employees' quality of life (QoL). However, remote work also carries risks: social isolation, erosion of informal support networks, difficulties in boundary management (leading to longer work hours), and reduced access to organizational resources and career development opportunities (2007). Outcomes are heterogeneous: net effects depend on job characteristics (routine vs. knowledge work), managerial practices (trust, support, boundary norms), individual differences (self regulation, caregiving responsibilities), and domestic environments.

South Asian Cultural Context

Cultural norms in South Asia—characterised by collectivism, strong family ties, and face to face social rituals—shape how remote work is experienced. Multi generational households and dense family responsibilities may limit private, uninterrupted workspace and increase role conflict for those working from home. In some organisational cultures that prize presenteeism and visible dedication, remote work may be perceived as less legitimate, affecting recognition, promotion, and social standing. At the same time, remote work can create new opportunities for family integration and care, but only if workplaces offer flexible arrangements sensitive to local gendered and household norms. Research in South Asian settings should therefore foreground household composition, gender roles, and cultural expectations when assessing QoL outcomes.

Technology Infrastructure and Accessibility

Reliable digital infrastructure is a prerequisite for productive and equitable remote work. Persistent gaps in broadband coverage, intermittent power supply, and limited access to affordable devices constrain the feasibility of remote work, especially in rural and low income areas. Digital inequalities translate directly into disparities in autonomy, productivity, and social inclusion: workers lacking adequate connectivity face interruptions, reduced participation in meetings, and limited access to training and support. Employers' provision of equipment, stipends, or access to co working hubs can mitigate but not fully eliminate structural access differences. Studies should disaggregate effects by urban/rural residence, income, and sector to inform targeted infrastructure and policy interventions.

Comparative Evidence: Europe on Remote and Hybrid Work

European studies provide mixed but informative evidence on remote and hybrid arrangements. Hybrid models—combining in office and remote days—appear promising as a compromise that preserves in person social capital while granting flexibility; many European workers express a preference for hybrid arrangements as the future of work.

Nevertheless, European research also highlights persistent challenges: remote and hybrid work can exacerbate sedentary behavior and musculoskeletal risks, heighten blurring of work–home boundaries, and produce unequal outcomes across socio economic groups. Institutional contexts—labour protections, social safety nets, and broadband penetration—shape the extent to which benefits are realized at scale. Europe's experience suggests that hybrid models, accompanied by explicit organisational norms,

managerial training, and investment in employee well being, can balance flexibility with social connectedness.

Conclusion

This review synthesizes multidisciplinary evidence on the implications of digitalization and remote work for employee quality of life (QoL), highlighting effects across the physical, psychological, independence, social, environmental, safety and resource, and spiritual domains. The findings indicate that remote and hybrid work arrangements present both opportunities and challenges. Benefits such as increased autonomy, reduced commuting burdens, greater work–life flexibility, and enhanced opportunities for personal and spiritual practices can contribute positively to well-being. At the same time, risks including social isolation, blurred work–life boundaries, ergonomic concerns, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, unequal access to digital infrastructure, and disparities arising from household and socioeconomic conditions may negatively affect QoL.

The evidence consistently demonstrates that remote work outcomes are highly context dependent. Individual characteristics, occupational demands, organizational practices, cultural norms, household structures, and technological infrastructure interact to shape employees' experiences. Consequently, the benefits of digitalization are neither automatic nor equally distributed across populations. These findings underscore the need for holistic and context-sensitive approaches that recognize the multidimensional nature of QoL and address the diverse realities of employees in different social, economic, and cultural settings.

Several important research gaps remain. Future studies should adopt longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to establish

causal relationships and assess the long-term effects of remote and hybrid work on health, well-being, career development, and social connectedness. Greater attention is needed to measurement refinement, particularly in capturing dimensions such as autonomy, spiritual well-being, virtual social engagement, and boundary management. Research should also investigate the mechanisms and moderating factors that influence QoL outcomes, including managerial practices, organizational support, digital infrastructure, household composition, occupational characteristics, and cultural contexts. Comparative studies across sectors, demographic groups, and countries—especially within underrepresented contexts such as Nepal and South Asia—are essential to understand variations in remote work experiences and outcomes.

Evidence is also needed on the effectiveness of interventions designed to enhance employee well-being in digital work environments. Future research should evaluate organizational strategies such as ergonomic support, mental health programs, virtual social engagement initiatives, manager training, digital well-being policies, flexible scheduling practices, and workplace spiritual support programs. Such studies should consider both effectiveness and equity to ensure that interventions benefit diverse employee groups and do not reinforce existing inequalities.

From a policy and practice perspective, organizations and governments should prioritize investments in digital infrastructure, ergonomic resources, digital literacy, and inclusive workplace policies. Labour regulations must evolve to address occupational safety in remote settings, benefits portability, employee privacy, and protections for vulnerable and precarious workers. Evidence-based management practices

that foster trust, social connection, autonomy, and psychological well-being will be critical for sustaining healthy and productive remote work environments.

Building on the conceptual framework developed in this review, future empirical research should examine how domain-specific characteristics of remote work influence overall QoL using multidimensional assessment tools such as the WHOQOL-BREF. Particular attention should be given to identifying key mediators and moderators of these relationships and evaluating interventions that can improve outcomes across diverse employee populations.

In conclusion, digitalization and remote work are reshaping the nature of employment and employee well-being in profound ways. While these transformations offer significant potential to enhance quality of life, their success depends on supportive organizational practices, equitable access to resources, and responsive policy frameworks. Advancing rigorous, context-sensitive, and interdisciplinary research will be essential to ensuring that the future of work promotes not only productivity and flexibility but also sustainable, inclusive, and holistic improvements in employee quality of life.

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