MENTAL HEALTH AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRUCT: A STRATEGIC REORIENTATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR WORK ENVIRONMENT DESIGN

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Abstract - *Mental health in the workplace is predominantly a socio-structural outcome rather than an individual failing. This literature study examines burnout, stress, and anxiety as consequences of organizational architecture, work demands, and social norms. The analysis reveals how hierarchical structures, excessive formalization, and unrealistic workloads systematically generate psychological pressure, while cultural norms stigmatizing vulnerability and digital tools eroding work-life boundaries exacerbate these effects. The study argues that individual-focused interventions are insufficient, necessitating a fundamental reorientation of Human Resource Management (HRM). HRM must evolve from managing individuals to designing psychologically healthy social environments. This entails leading organizational diagnostics to identify systemic pressure points, advocating for regenerative job design that fulfills psychological needs, developing leadership capacities for psychological safety, and restructuring reward systems to value sustainable work practices and collective well-being. The role expands to include ethical oversight of workplace technology and the cultivation of metrics that capture the quality of the social environment. Ultimately, this repositions HRM as a strategic designer of organizational systems, tasked with creating workplaces where mental health is an emergent property of a fair, supportive, and humanely structured social ecology.*

Keywords: Workplace Mental Health; Burnout; Socio-Structural Determinants; Job Design; Organizational Culture; Human Resource Management; Psychological Safety.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health in the workplace has long been in a paradoxical position in organizational discourse. Rhetorically, it is recognized as an important component of employee well-being, but in practice it is often reduced to a matter of personal resilience or individual weakness. In contemporary social literature, this approach is increasingly criticized for failing to see mental health as the result of broader social and relational processes, rather than merely an internal condition of the individual (Warin, 2021; Khayru & Gardi, 2024). In fact, experiences of burnout, chronic stress, and work anxiety do not arise in a social vacuum. They emanate from a specific environment shaped by organizational design, power structures, and systematic patterns of interaction. Individual psychological approaches, which focus on personal stress management or employee assistance programmers, while beneficial, tend to obscure the structural root causes that produce such psychological pressure (Alberta, 2024). In other words, mental health issues in the workplace are organizational problems manifested at the individual level. To understand them fully, a shift in perspective is needed from clinical psychology to organizational sociology, namely by examining how the governance, norms, and working relationships created by organizations directly shape and constrain the psychological experiences of everyone within them.

Organizational structure functions as a framework that regulates resource allocation, authority distribution, and decision-making processes (Deady et al., 2024). The characteristics of this structure, such as the level of centralization, formalization, and complexity, have direct consequences for workload and psychological stress. A high degree of centralization of authority, for example, tends to create bottlenecks in decision-making, slow down responses to problems, and increase the dependence of lower-level employees on their superiors. This results in feelings of powerlessness and frustration. Excessive formalization, with rigid rules and procedures, can hinder autonomy and creativity, creating a mechanistic work experience that does not meet psychological needs for competence and self-control. Complex and ambiguous organizational structures, with overlapping reporting lines, often give rise to role conflicts and unclear expectations, which are significant sources of chronic stress. Research on mental workload and work fatigue shows that job design is a major determinant of collective psychological pressure in both production and service environments (Irfan, 2022). Thus, the organizational architecture itself acts as the primary generator of pressure.

Above the formal structure, there is a system of work demands that is designed and communicated. These demands include quantitative workload, time pressure, task complexity, and emotional demands inherent in certain roles (Khalid et al., 2024). In an economy oriented towards maximum productivity and efficiency, work demands are often designed without considering the limits of human cognitive and emotional capacity. This phenomenon is reinforced by changing social values and performance expectations that collectively shape the definition of "ideal work" and "successful

employees" in modern organizations (Khayru & Gardi, 2024). A work culture that normalizes long working hours, availability outside of working hours via digital devices, and aggressive target achievement creates an ecosystem of constant pressure. Concepts such as "hustle culture" or "workaholism" are not only practiced by individuals but are socially promoted and valued within organizations, becoming group norms that are difficult to challenge. Employees who try to maintain healthy boundaries between work and personal life may be seen as less committed. Therefore, excessive demands and unhealthy work norms function as a social machine that systematically erodes mental health.

Social norms in the workplace, both explicit and implicit, shape how emotions and mental states are expressed and managed (Wainwright & Wainwright, 2019). In many organizations, there are "emotional rules" that require employees to display certain emotions (such as enthusiasm or friendliness) and suppress others (such as anger or sadness), regardless of what they actually feel. This enforced regulation of emotions requires considerable psychological effort and can lead to emotional exhaustion, a core component of burnout. Furthermore, a strong stigma still attaches to mental health issues in many work environments. Admitting to experiencing anxiety or depression is often seen as a sign of weakness or incompetence, which risks professional reputation and career advancement. This stigma forces individuals to hide their suffering, delay seeking help, and try to cope on their own, thereby exacerbating their condition. Thus, an organizational culture that does not allow for human vulnerability creates a socially toxic environment for psychological health.

The role of Human Resource Management in this narrative is critical and ambiguous (Eddine et al., 2023). On the one hand, HRM is often the function that designs work systems, policies, and programmers that directly influence working conditions (Darmawan, 2024). On the other hand, HRM also operates as an organizational agent tasked with implementing efficiency and productivity policies that may be contradictory to employee welfare. The responsibility for creating a "healthy work environment" is often delegated to HRM, but without sufficient authority to change the core work structures and practices that are the source of the problems. Wellness programmers such as yoga classes or stress management seminars, while well-intentioned, become a band-aid over structural wounds if workloads remain inhumane, leadership remains toxic, and work culture remains stigmatizing. Therefore, the fundamental question is how HR can move beyond peripheral programmers and engage in the redesign of work and organizational structures themselves, to create a sociologically healthy environment, i.e. one that supports autonomy, fairness, and supportive social relationships as its foundation.

The main problem that arises is the artificial separation between mental health issues and organizational analysis. When burnout and anxiety are understood as individual problems, organizations lose the opportunity to implement more effective and sustainable structural interventions. This approach ignores evidence that work effectiveness, productivity, and well-being are greatly influenced by supervisory support, work facilities, and supportive management systems (Putra et al., 2022). An excessive focus on individuals causes organizations to continue reproducing pathogenic working conditions. This is both an ethical and an efficiency issue. Ethically, it is a transfer of responsibility from the organization as the creator of working conditions to employees as the bearers of the burden. In terms of efficiency, it is like continuously mopping a wet floor without turning off the leaking tap; the problem will continue to recur because the source is not addressed. As a result, organizations incur high costs from absenteeism, employee turnover, and decreased productivity, while the root structural problems remain unaddressed (Darmawan et al., 2020).

The second issue is the dominance of short-term economic logic in job design, which disregards psychological and social considerations. Competitive pressure and a culture of extreme performativity reinforce collective anxiety, especially when social interactions are colored by insecurity and continuous evaluation (Aisyah & Issalillah, 2021). In an effort to achieve maximum efficiency and cost reduction, jobs are often designed according to Tayloristic principles that separate planning from execution, minimize autonomy, and maximize control (Papademetriou et al., 2024). Such designs may increase output in the short term, but in the long term they damage human capital by causing fatigue, disengagement, and cynicism. In addition, competitive pressure and an extreme culture of performativity create a social environment fraught with insecurity, mutual suspicion, and destructive internal competition. When employees feel they must constantly prove their worth and fear losing their jobs, collective anxiety levels will skyrocket. Reward and promotion structures based solely on individual output, without considering collaboration or contributions to a healthy social climate, further reinforce patterns of behavior and work norms that undermine mental health. Thus, mental health issues in the workplace are closely linked to underlying management models and organizational philosophies.

An in-depth discussion of this topic is essential because we are at a critical moment where the burden of mental health in the workplace has reached alarming levels globally, yet organizational responses are often still fragmented and inadequate. Understanding the socio-structural roots of this problem is not merely an academic exercise, but a prerequisite for designing truly impactful interventions. Without this understanding, any efforts will be symptomatic and temporary. A sociological approach allows us to see patterns and systems, not just episodes and individuals. It helps identify leverage points within organizations, i.e. structural and cultural aspects that, if changed, can lead to significant improvements in the collective experience and mental health of employees. This approach shifts the conversation from "What is wrong with stressed employees?" to "What is it about our organizational design that causes so many people to be stressed?".

Furthermore, legal and social demands regarding corporate responsibility for employee welfare are increasing in various countries. Organizations can no longer ignore the psychological dimension of the work environment without facing reputational, legal and financial risks. In addition, there is growing evidence that psychologically healthy workplaces are more innovative, productive, and able to retain talent in the long term. Therefore, creating a sociologically healthy work environment is no longer just an ethical issue or a "nice-to-have" programmed, but a strategic necessity for organizational sustainability in the 21st century. A systematic literature review of this sociostructurally perspective can provide a clear roadmap for leaders, organizational designers, and HRM practitioners to build workplaces that are not only free from physical hazards but also support mental health through

This literature study aims to analyses and synthesize sociostructurally perspectives on mental health in the workplace, focusing on how formal and informal organizational elements systematically shape employees' psychological experiences. Specifically, this study seeks to elucidate the mechanisms through which structural design, workload, and cultural norms act as generators of collective psychological pressure, thereby shifting the understanding of mental health issues from the individual domain to the organizational domain. The expected theoretical contribution is the strengthening of the sociological analytical framework in organizational mental health studies, as well as the integration of insights from organizational theory, work studies, and social psychology. From a practical perspective, this research seeks to provide conceptual recommendations for reformulating the role and strategies of Human Resource Management. These recommendations are directed at transforming HRM from a function that primarily reacts to individual problems into a proactive function that designs and maintains work systems, social relationships, and organizational culture that intrinsically support psychological health and prevent the emergence of pathological conditions at the system level.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was designed as a qualitative literature study aimed at developing an interpretative and theoretical understanding of mental health in the workplace from a socio-structural perspective. A qualitative approach was chosen due to its suitability for exploring the complexity of social phenomena, understanding the underlying meanings and processes, and synthesizing concepts from various relevant disciplines. Literature studies enable researchers to conduct in-depth investigations into existing bodies of knowledge, identify patterns of relationships between organizational variables and psychological outcomes, and develop coherent theoretical propositions without collecting primary data. This process is constructive and iterative, in which researchers are actively involved in selecting, critically reading, and connecting various text sources to form an analytical narrative that answers research questions. The researcher's position is that of a synthesizer and interpreter, who not only summarizes the literature but also constructs new arguments through the rearrangement and contextualization of ideas from various fields such as organizational sociology, occupational health psychology, and human resource management.

This literature study was conducted with reference to the methodological framework commonly used in text analysis-based qualitative research. The initial stage began with defining the scope of the study and clearly formulating the inclusion criteria. Next, a literature search was conducted on various reliable sources, including scientific journal articles, monographs, and academic publications relevant to structural and cultural issues in organizational mental health, burnout, job design, and human resource management functions. The search process utilized a combination of strategically designed keywords through academic databases such as PsycINFO, Business Source Complete, and Scopus.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which included stages of in-depth understanding of the text, initial coding, grouping and development of themes, review of themes, and finalization and naming of themes. Through this process, a number of key conceptual themes were identified, including organizational structure pathology, emotional economy at work, and the concept of regenerative job design.

At the synthesis stage, this study adopted the narrative synthesis method as described by Popay and colleagues (2006). This approach was used to compile findings from various studies into a coherent narrative flow, with the aim of explaining the interrelationships between concepts, cause-and-effect patterns, and building arguments in a gradual and systematic manner. The integration process was carried out by examining the similarities and differences in perspectives in the literature, resulting in a comprehensive, consistent, and scientifically accountable synthesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Stress Architecture: Structure, Demands, and Norms as Determinants of Mental Health

Organizational structures serve as frameworks that determine information flow patterns, authority distribution, and coordination forms. Specific characteristics of these frameworks, such as the level of hierarchy, formalization of rules, and clarity of division of labor, are not neutral to individuals' psychological conditions. Employees who work in a human-oriented and collaborative culture report the lowest levels of stress, followed by those who work in an innovation/development-oriented culture and those who work in a bureaucratic/hierarchical culture (Dextras-Gauthier et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the view that organizational design has direct implications for the well-being and

productivity of the workforce across age groups and modern work (Darmawan, 2020). Excessively rigid and long hierarchies, for example, create social distance and communication gaps between the operational level and the decision-making level. Lower-level employees experience what is known as learned helplessness, where they feel that important decisions affecting their work are made without input or transparency. This feeling of lack of control is a strong psychological predictor of chronic stress and emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, highly compartmentalized structures with rigid departmentalization limit social interaction and cross-functional peer support, leaving individuals feeling isolated in their silos, lacking the social resources to cope with work pressures. Organizational structure is thus not merely a chart on paper, but a machine that actively produces or mitigates feelings of autonomy, connection, and procedural justice.

Excessive formalization, manifested through strict procedural manuals, complex reporting requirements, and micro-management, directly limits employees' room for man oeuvre and independent decision-making. Perceived red tape, as the impression or perception that formal procedures are burdensome and ineffective, acts as a hindrance to job demands that inhibits employee engagement (Jiang et al., 2023). Humans have a basic psychological need to feel competent and autonomous. When jobs are designed in such a way that they eliminate room for personal judgement, creativity, or adjustments to the way work is done, they fail to meet these basic needs. Repeated disappointment in these psychological needs' leads to a decline in intrinsic motivation, which gradually shifts to apathy and cynicism, two core components of burnout syndrome. This condition is in line with findings showing that burnout and work stress are negatively correlated with job satisfaction and overall employee well-being (Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2022). Formalism also tends to slow down the process of adapting to change, as every adjustment must go through a lengthy bureaucratic process. In a rapidly changing business environment, this slowness creates additional pressure, where frontline employees face new demands but are shackled by inflexible old systems, resulting in frustration and anxiety about performance.

The work demands system designed in modern organizations often disregards the limits of human capacity. Quantitative demands, such as unrealistic workloads and impossible deadlines, directly overwhelm individuals' cognitive abilities, causing mental fatigue and a decline in work quality. Work demands are defined as aspects of work that require sustained physical or mental effort, such as emotional demands and unfavorable working conditions, which reduce engagement and are causes of work exhaustion (burnout) (Lee & Jo, 2023). However, more subtle are the qualitative nature of demands, such as increased task complexity without adequate support or hidden emotional demands in service roles. In sustainable organizations, employee well-being is increasingly seen as the foundation of long-term performance stability, rather than merely an individual variable (Issalillah et al., 2025). Organizations operating with lean and just-in-time logic tend to minimize slack in the system, so that even minor disruptions or absences can place significant pressure on the remaining individuals. This type of job design lacks resilience; it turns every employee into a critical point in the labor supply chain. Chronic excessive workloads are not only physically and mentally exhausting, but also erode important recovery time, disrupting the natural cycle of rest and recovery necessary for maintaining long-term psychological health.

Digital technology, while making many things easier, has blurred the physical and temporal boundaries between work and personal life. Availability via email, instant messaging, and cloud collaboration platforms creates an expectation for immediate response, often outside formal working hours. The emerging social norm is that being responsive is a sign of commitment and professionalism. The possibility of being called upon by work demands via technology outside of working hours, weekends, and holidays can contribute to increasingly blurred boundaries between the spheres of work and family, causing these two roles to conflict and increasing perceptions of stress as a result (Giunchi et al., 2023). In these circumstances, the need for mental health protection mechanisms, including safe and legal digital-based psychological services, becomes increasingly relevant (Isnani et al., 2024). This erosion of boundaries has profound psychological consequences. Individuals lose periods of uninterrupted recovery, a time when the stress system can return to baseline. This constant state of alertness increases levels of chronic stress hormones such as cortisol, which is associated with anxiety, sleep disturbances, and decreased immune function. In addition, the inability to completely disconnect from work hinders the psychological process of detachment, which is essential for preventing burnout. Thus, digitally connected work structures function as infrastructure that facilitates the infiltration of work pressure into all areas of life.

Social and organizational cultural norms shape how this pressure is experienced and articulated. In cultures that are highly performance-oriented and individualistic, psychological distress is often privatized. Employees feel that acknowledging overload or asking for help is an admission of personal failure in managing demands. The widespread stigma surrounding mental illness often leads to the concealment of symptoms and a reluctance to seek professional help, especially in hierarchical work environments (Poddar & Chhajer, 2024). The culture of "presenteeism", both physical and virtual, punishes those who do not appear to be giving their all to their work. In such environments, employees experiencing burnout may work even harder to hide their symptoms of exhaustion, thereby deepening the destructive cycle. This norm also affects leadership; managers who are themselves burdened by the same system may feel powerless to change the demands, or may even transmit the pressure downwards, reinforcing existing patterns rather than interrupting them. Culture becomes a mechanism for channeling and reinforcing structural pressure.

Another aspect of work norms is the mandatory management of emotions. Many roles, especially in the service sector, require employees to display certain positive emotions regardless of their internal state, a practice known as emotional labor. However, excessive emotional strain or a mismatch between organizational rules on emotional expression and individuals' personal emotions can cause stress or lead to negative outcomes such as perceived work fatigue (Chen et al., 2024). The quality of supportive social interactions is a crucial factor in mitigating the negative effects of such emotional demands (Oluwatosin & Darmawan, 2024). Constant efforts to modify or hide true feelings in order to conform to organizational rules require considerable psychological resources. When the mismatch between felt emotions and displayed emotions is too great or lasts too long, it can lead to emotional dissonance, feelings of alienation from oneself, and ultimately emotional exhaustion. Organizations that commodify smiles and friendliness as part of their product, without providing adequate support for employees to process their true emotions, essentially extract emotional capital until it is depleted without any process of replenishment.

Reward structures and career systems are also important determinants. Highly competitive systems, where advancement depends on relative performance compared to colleagues, create an environment of insecurity and covert hostility. The fear of falling behind or losing one's position triggers ongoing anxiety. If the system is also opaque and appears arbitrary, it generates feelings of injustice, which are a powerful source of social stress. Job insecurity is known to significantly predict poor mental/physical health, fatigue, work stress, intention to quit, and decreased commitment to the organization (Jung et al., 2023). Conversely, family support and work–life balance have been shown to act as protective factors for worker well-being (Hariani & Mardikaningsih, 2023). However, in an economy that normalizes uncertainty and short-term contract work, these buffers are diminishing, leaving individuals more vulnerable to the effects of other stressors because they lack a stable foundation of security.

The physical work environment, although often overlooked, is part of the structure that influences mental health. Open-plan office layouts dominated by noise and constant distractions can increase cognitive load and reduce the ability to concentrate, causing frustration and fatigue. Many aspects of lighting (daylight), office layout/design, and thermal comfort and temperature have been shown to be associated with numerous mental health indicators (Kropman et al., 2023). Lack of access to natural light, private spaces, or quiet rest areas can also contribute to feelings of stress. The physical design of workspaces communicates organizational values; crowded and impersonal spaces suggest that efficiency and density are prioritized over employee comfort and well-being. The interaction between physical design and job design creates an ecology of stress in which seemingly minor factors reinforce each other to create an exhausting work experience.

Organizational communication, or the lack of effective communication, serves as a channel through which structural pressure is felt. Unclear, contradictory, or delayed information creates uncertainty, which is one of the most powerful psychological stressors for humans. When new policies are introduced without adequate explanation of the reasons behind them, or when changes occur rapidly without notice, employees feel like pawns in a game they do not understand. A lack of constructive feedback is also problematic; without a clear understanding of how their performance is being evaluated, employees may experience constant anxiety about whether they are meeting expectations. High message transference and network translucence are positively associated with information overload and social overload, which in turn amplify individuals' levels of work stress (Yang & Pitafi, 2023). Poor communication systems magnify the negative effects of already problematic structures by adding layers of ambiguity and uncertainty.

Finally, it is important to note that these socio-structural determinants do not operate in isolation. They are interrelated and mutually reinforcing within a system. Rigid hierarchical structures reinforce a culture of compliance and fear, which in turn strengthens the norm of hiding suffering. An approach that places mental health as part of organizational culture and design allows for more strategic and sustainable interventions (Rojak et al., 2025). High work demands, driven by external competitive pressures, are brought into organizations through strict performance management systems, exacerbated by poor communication and lack of resources. Digital technology then ensures that this pressure can follow employees wherever they go. The result is an organizational ecosystem that, although designed for efficiency and productivity, inadvertently becomes a machine that generates stress, anxiety, and fatigue at epidemic levels. Understanding mental health through this lens reveals that fragmented solutions, such as resilience training for individuals, will never be enough. What is needed is an audit and redesign of these systemic components, as the pressures are endemic to the contemporary organizational design in many sectors. Meaningful interventions must target the architecture of the pressures themselves, by changing structures, redesigning work, and altering cultural norms to create environments that are intrinsically more humane and less pathogenic.

HRM Reorientation: From Individual Management to Healthy Social Environment Design

The Human Resource Management function faces a paradigmatic demand to shift from its traditional focus on managing and improving individuals to a role as a designer of the organizational social environment that actively supports psychological health. This shift implies that the main responsibility of HRM is no longer simply to select the right people or provide training to cope with stress, but to design work systems that prevent psychopathological pressures from arising in the first place. This vision treats mental health as an outcome that emerges from a well-designed system, rather than as

an aberration that needs to be corrected at the individual level. In this new role, HRM acts as a social engineer, using principles from occupational psychology, organizational sociology, and systems design to reshape the structural and cultural elements that have been identified as generators of stress. This approach is preventive and prospective, focusing on creating conditions that enable individuals to thrive, rather than simply treating those who are already ill. These emerging practices reflect human resource management (HRM) activities that are considered conducive to employee well-being and, consequently, their job performance (Parent-Lamarche et al., 2023). This means that psychological well-being is an integral component of quality of working life and performance evaluation systems in modern HRM (Eddine et al., 2021).

The first operational step in this reorientation is to lead the process of auditing and diagnosing the organization through the lens of psychological health, not just productivity or compliance. HRM needs to develop and implement diagnostic tools that can map structural pressure points within the organization. This may include anonymous surveys that specifically ask about job design, role clarity, procedural fairness, social support from supervisors and colleagues, and the level of autonomy experienced. In addition to surveys, qualitative methods such as workload analysis, ethnographic observations of workflows, and focus group discussions can reveal discrepancies between formal policies and real experiences. As in Naji et al. (2022), leadership, communication, and the work environment have a negative impact on psychosocial hazards, particularly job expectations, control, roles and relationships, emphasizing that structural job factors are a major contributor to psychosocial risks in the workplace and need to be systematically identified through organizational diagnosis. Data from these diagnostic tools must then be analyzed to identify systemic patterns and hotspots of stress, such as specific departments with high emotional demands but low resources, or positions with chronic role ambiguity. The results of this diagnosis form the basis for targeted strategic interventions, shifting resources from generic wellness programmers towards specific systemic changes. This diagnostic approach is important for capturing psychological vulnerabilities that arise from social and structural pressures, rather than solely individual characteristics (Khayru, 2025).

The most fundamental intervention lies in the realm of job design and workload allocation. HRM must be an advocate and architect for regenerative job design principles, built to meet basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and connectedness. In practical terms, this means restructuring jobs to ensure task variety, perceived meaning, and direct feedback on results. It also involves setting realistic standards for work volume and pace, actively countering a culture that normalizes overwork as a sign of dedication. HR can introduce mechanisms such as periodic "workload audits," where teams collectively review whether resources match demands and make adjustments before burnout occurs. This role also includes evaluating and limiting the use of technology that blurs work boundaries, by establishing clear communication policies on expected response times and encouraging digital disconnection outside of working hours. Work autonomy has a significant influence on employee well-being, indicating that employees' psychological well-being is a direct consequence of how work is designed and the level of control given to individuals within the work system (Sheng et al., 2022). In addition to structural factors, an individual's capacity to manage daily emotions also plays a role as a resource that supports psychological well-being in demanding work environments (Irfan & Darmawan, 2021).

Building leadership capacity that supports mental health is another critical pillar. First-line managers often serve as intermediaries between organizational policies and employees' daily experiences. HRM needs to transform leadership training from a focus on control and delivery of results to the development of skills to create a psychologically safe environment. This training should include skills to recognize signs of psychological distress without stigma, conduct supportive conversations, negotiate realistic workloads, and model a healthy work-life balance. More importantly, performance appraisal and compensation systems for managers must be revised to reward and incentivize leadership behaviors that support team wellbeing, such as maintaining low turnover rates, fostering engagement, and creating a climate of trust. Without changes to these reward systems, leadership training will be ineffective because it is not aligned with the organization's actual reward logic. Supportive leadership is associated with all well-being variables studied in the hypothesized direction, including job satisfaction, stress management, and general well-being, indicating that leadership style can play a significant role in the psychological health of employees in modern organizations (Lundqvist et al., 2022). This leadership role is also relevant in strengthening psychological capital as a strategic asset that drives individual performance and resilience in the workplace (Hariani & Putra, 2024).

The organization's overall reward and recognition system also needs to be redesigned. Systems that only reward individual output and heroic achievements often sacrifice teamwork, collaboration, and sustainable work practices. HRM can design systems that also recognize and reward contributions to a healthy social climate, such as mentoring colleagues, sharing knowledge, or collective efforts to reduce team workload. Recognizing efforts to maintain balance and prevent overload, rather than simply rewarding those who work late into the night, sends a strong cultural signal about the organization's new values. This shift in the reward system is a concrete way to operationalize a commitment to mental health, linking it directly to the incentive structures that shape behavior. Research by Manzoor et al. (2021) shows that employee motivation significantly mediates the relationship between intrinsic rewards and employee performance.

Psychological well-being has been shown to play an important role in improving employee performance (Jahroni & Darmawan, 2024).

Overcoming the stigma of mental health requires proactive and sustainable communication strategies and policies from HRM. This involves leadership in normalizing conversations about psychological well-being, starting at the top of the organization. With the rise of digital mental health services, attention to ethical, privacy, and data protection aspects is crucial so that psychological support does not create new risks for employees (Isnani et al., 2024). HR can facilitate awareness campaigns, invite speakers to share their experiences, and ensure that internal communication materials consistently include language about mental health. However, the most important thing is to create policies and access channels that are free from fear of seeking support. This means ensuring that Employee Assistance Programmed are truly confidential, and that taking leave for mental health reasons will not hinder career progression. HR can also innovate with policies such as additional "wellness days", access to company-funded online therapy, or resilience training that focuses on teams rather than individuals to strengthen social capital.

The role of HRM also extends to overseeing recruitment and selection practices. Rather than simply seeking candidates who appear "tough" and capable of working long hours, the selection process must be evaluated to identify and eliminate biases that discriminate against those who may be more open about their need for work-life balance or have a history of mental health issues. Furthermore, HRM can use the recruitment process as an opportunity to communicate transparently about the organization's work culture, realistic role demands, and available policies and support for wellbeing. Attracting talent that aligns with healthy work values can help build a more balanced culture from the outset, rather than trying to change an already established culture later on.

In digital transformation, HR has a responsibility not only to adopt new tools, but also to establish ethical guidelines for their use in order to protect mental health. This includes establishing policies on employee monitoring that respect privacy, preventing the use of scheduling or performance management algorithms that create inhumane pressure, and ensuring that collaboration platforms do not become channels for communication that demand a 24/7 response. Successful AI integration in HR requires a balanced approach that prioritizes employee wellbeing, facilitates human-AI collaboration, and ensures ethical and transparent AI practices alongside technological advances (Sadeghi, 2024). HRM must partner with the IT department to review the psychosocial impact of new technologies before they are implemented, ensuring that technical efficiency is not achieved at the expense of human wellbeing.

Measuring the success of this new approach requires different metrics. HRM needs to move beyond reactive metrics such as absenteeism and employee turnover rates, towards prospective and positive metrics that capture the quality of the social work environment. Indicators such as psychological well-being scores in engagement surveys, perceptions of procedural justice, levels of trust in management, and the strength of social support networks within teams can provide a more accurate picture of the health of the organizational system. Tracking trends in these metrics over time enables HRM to assess the impact of their structural interventions and make necessary adjustments, creating a continuous improvement cycle centered on creating a healthy environment.

Finally, this reorientation places HRM at the center of ensuring organizational justice. Many determinants of stress are rooted in perceptions of injustice, whether distributive, procedural, or interactional. By designing systems that are transparent, consistent, and respectful of the dignity of each individual, HRM can directly reduce the main sources of psychosocial stress. This approach strengthens HRM's role as a strategic actor in building a sustainable, performance-oriented organizational culture based on mental health (Rojak et al., 2025). This includes ensuring fair promotion processes, a functioning grievance system, and restorative rather than purely punitive disciplinary policies. By acting as the guardian of organizational justice, HRM not only creates a healthier environment but also builds legitimacy and trust, which are the foundations for long-term organizational resilience.

At its core, the proposed reorientation of HRM is a transformation from a support service function to a strategic design function. This requires HRM professionals to expand their expertise into the fields of organizational design, psychometrics, technology ethics, and systemic change. This new role is about moving the right levers in the organizational architecture to shape conditions in which mental health can flourish naturally. By focusing on creating a sociologically healthy social environment, HRM can transform organizations from unintentional pressure-generating machines into ecosystems that support human growth, where productivity and well-being are not conflicting goals, but mutually reinforcing outcomes of a wisely and humanely designed system.

CONCLUSIONS

This literature review concludes that mental health issues in the workplace, such as burnout, stress, and anxiety, are substantially the product of socio-structural factors embedded in organizational design, rather than solely individual pathology. Various elements of organizational architecture function as generators of systematic pressure: rigid hierarchical and formal structures limit autonomy and create powerlessness; excessive and unrealistic work demands ignore human capacity limits; and cultural norms that stigmatize vulnerability and normalize emotional exploitation exacerbate psychological burdens. Digital technology that blurs the boundaries between work and personal life further

intensifies this pressure. The sociostructurally perspective reveals that psychological pressure is endemic to many contemporary organizational models, meaning that interventions targeting individuals alone, such as resilience training, are fundamentally inadequate. To create sustainable change, a fundamental reorientation of the function of Human Resource Management is required, from a focus on individual management and improvement to a role as a designer of the organizational social environment that actively and proactively supports psychological health through changes to systems, structures, and culture.

The theoretical implication of this study is the strengthening and expansion of the sociological framework in studying organizational mental health. These findings emphasize the need to integrate organizational theory, work theory, and social psychology more closely to fully understand how social arrangements in the workplace produce psychological conditions. These implications open up new avenues of research that examine specific causal relationships between organizational design variables (such as team autonomy, procedural justice) and indicators of collective mental health, as well as exploring alternative organizational models that are inherently less pathogenic. In practical terms, the most significant implication is the demand for a profound transformation of HRM functions, skills, and metrics. HRM professionals need to develop competencies in data-driven organizational diagnosis, regenerative job design, leadership coaching that supports wellbeing, and policy development that addresses the root causes of stress. For organizations, adopting this approach means shifting investment from peripheral wellness programmers towards investments in structural changes that create fair, meaningful, and humane work environments, which ultimately become a source of competitive advantage through a healthier, more engaged, and resilient workforce.

Based on these findings and implications, several recommendations are proposed. First, for academic researchers, it is recommended to conduct collaborative action research in partnership with organizations to design, implement, and evaluate specific structural interventions (e.g., job redesign reforms or reward system revisions) and measure their impact on long-term mental health metrics. Longitudinal research is also needed to map how organizational culture changes affect stigma and help-seeking. Second, for HRM practitioners and organizational leaders, it is recommended to start by conducting a comprehensive organizational health audit to map structural stress points. The next concrete steps could include revising job descriptions to incorporate psychological principles, reforming manager performance appraisal systems to include team well-being indicators, and establishing clear digital communication policies to protect recovery time. Thirdly, for HRM professional associations and certification bodies, it is recommended to rapidly develop and incorporate modules on organizational psychology, healthy work system design, and labor ethics into core curricula and certification requirements, thereby ensuring that prospective professionals are equipped with the mindset and tools necessary for their roles as sociologically healthy work environment designers.

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