Human Resource Management Strategies to Reduce Burnout and Improve Well-Being: A Literature Review with the Job Demands-Resources Framework

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A R T I C L E I N F O

A B S T R A C T

High rates of emotional exhaustion (burnout) and declining psychological well-being of employees are serious challenges in modern human resource management, especially in sectors with high work pressure. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of integrated human resource management (HRM) strategies in reducing burnout and improving employee psychological well-being through a systematic literature review approach. This study used a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach to more than 30 recent scientific articles, which included meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and empirical studies from various industry sectors. The literature reviewed was selected using a purposive sampling technique based on topic relevance and publication quality. The results showed that a combination of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), work flexibility, supportive leadership training, and mental well-being programmes were significantly effective in reducing burnout and improving psychological well-being. The effectiveness of the interventions was influenced by organisational contexts such as psychosocial safety climate and transformational leadership style. In addition, technology-based digital approaches were also found to be effective when combined with interpersonal support. These findings provide important implications for the development of wellbeing-based HRM strategies in building psychologically healthy and sustainable workplaces.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the issue of mental health in the workplace has developed into an increasingly pressing global concern. Reports show that increasing workloads, accelerating digital transformation, and economic pressures due to recession and market uncertainty have exacerbated work-life imbalance. Moreover, the post-pandemic adoption of hybrid work systems offering flexibility has created blurred boundaries between personal and professional spaces, ultimately increasing the risk of chronic stress and burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Bianchi & Schonfeld, 2023). The World Health Organization (WHO) even classifies burnout as an occupational syndrome that can have serious impacts on performance and health, as well as being one of the main causes of increased absenteeism and decreased employee productivity globally (WHO, n.d.; Reed, 2025). Therefore, strategic and systematic steps are needed to develop interventions that are not only curative but also preventive through a human resource management approach.

The choice of human resource (HR) strategy as the focus of the study is based on its central role in designing and implementing policies that combine business objectives with employee wellbeing. The HR function is no longer limited to administrative aspects but has evolved into a key driver in creating a psychologically healthy work culture. Policies such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), flexible work arrangements, empathy-based leadership training, and internal social support are all part of an integrated HR strategy. In contrast to individual clinical approaches that are often reactive, HR approaches are cross-functional, involving line managers, HR professionals, and organisational policymakers as a whole, thus providing a broader systemic impact (Attridge, 2019; Parker & Wall, 1997).

This research focuses on a number of key interacting variables, namely job demands, organisational resources, and psychological outcomes such as burnout and mental wellbeing. The theoretical framework used is the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which explains that high job demands can lead to burnout if not matched by adequate organisational resources. In this context, HR strategies such as EAP, flexible work policies, and supportive leadership serve as buffers that can reduce the negative impact of job stress (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2016). As such, it is important to analyse the relationship between these variables to identify the most effective interventions.

Although a number of studies have addressed the effectiveness of programmes such as EAP (Attridge, 2019) or wellbeing issues in the work environment (Park et al., 2023), most still focus on a single approach and do not review HR interventions in an integrative and cross-functional manner. In addition, recent studies on work-family policies (WFP), such as the one by Medina-Garrido et al. (2023), tend to highlight the accessibility aspect without elaborating on the strategic relationship between various HR practices and systemic welfare improvement, especially in the post-pandemic context. In other words, no literature review thoroughly maps and analyses HR strategies as a coordinated policy package in responding to mental health challenges in the workplace.

In response to this gap, this study aims to compile a comprehensive literature review of HR strategies-including EAP, work flexibility policies, and supportive leadership-that are specifically geared towards addressing post-pandemic employee mental health challenges. The novelty of this study lies in its approach of integrating cross-functionality within one overarching conceptual framework. The benefits of this study include academic contributions as a basis for theory development and further research instruments, as well as practical benefits as guidance for HR practitioners in designing policies and programmes that are more responsive to employees' psychological needs. The specific objectives of this study were to (1) identify HR practices that are effective in reducing job burnout and improving psychological wellbeing, (2) classify and analyse the effectiveness of each strategy, and (3) develop a conceptual framework for HR policies that are inclusive, cross-functional, and adaptive to today's work challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Burnout

Burnout is a psychological condition characterised by emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and decreased personal achievement, generally as a result of ongoing work stress. Within the framework of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, burnout is triggered by an imbalance between high job demands and a lack of job resources that support workers in completing their tasks (Green, Mostafa, & Parent-Rocheleau, 2022). Research by Hu, Schaufeli, and Taris (2021) shows that emotional strain in the workplace accelerates the burnout process, especially if the organisation does not provide adequate emotional regulation strategies or psychosocial support.

Burnout not only affects individuals but also causes organisational losses in the form of decreased productivity, high absenteeism rates, and increased employee turnover. Therefore, understanding the factors that cause burnout is an important step in developing well-being-oriented HR management strategies (Lyu, Zhu, Zhong, & Hu, 2023).

Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological wellbeing encompasses affective and cognitive dimensions that indicate how individuals feel satisfied, emotionally prosperous, and able to manage stress in the context of work. In contemporary JD-R research, psychological wellbeing is positively influenced by the availability of job resources such as autonomy, positive feedback, and social support from colleagues and superiors (Brough et al., 2013). When job demands increase, the presence of strong job resources can mitigate the impact of stress on employees' mental wellbeing (Lyu et al., 2023).

Fernet, Trépanier, Austin, Gagné, and Forest (2015) confirmed that psychological wellbeing is also closely related to transformational leadership styles, as they can create a supportive work environment, intrinsically motivate employees, and reinforce the meaningfulness of work.

Human Resource Strategy

An effective HR strategy is not only aimed at improving performance but also at protecting and strengthening employees' psychological wellbeing. Programmes such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), flexible work policies, supportive leadership training, and the creation of a psychosocially safe work climate have been shown to reduce psychological distress and prevent burnout (Johnson et al., 2021). However, the success of these strategies largely depends on the extent to which organisations are able to create a work culture that is open, inclusive and responsive to employees' mental needs (Nielsen & Daniels, 2016).

Van Woerkom, Bakker, and Nishii (2016) emphasise that proactive and sustainable HR interventions, such as job redesign to increase autonomy and task variety, contribute greatly to strengthening employee resilience and sustaining long-term wellbeing.

Hypothesis Development

Relationship between Human Resource (HR) Strategies and Burnout

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory is the main basis for explaining how organisational interventions can affect employees' psychological state. In this model, burnout is a consequence of the imbalance between high job demands and the lack of supporting resources in the work environment (Demerouti et al., 2001). HR strategies such as the implementation of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), work flexibility, supportive leadership training, and a healthy organisational culture serve as "job resources" that can reduce job stress and burnout. The study by Green et al. (2022) showed that organisations with active and supportive HR strategies tend to have lower burnout rates than organisations with conventional administrative approaches.

In this context, HR strategies are considered instruments that can reduce the intensity of burnout by providing space for adaptation and psychological recovery for employees. When HR policies strengthen social support, autonomy, and involvement, employees tend to be more resistant to stress and the risk of burnout. Based on this description, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Effective human resource strategies negatively affect burnout.

Relationship between Human Resource Strategy and Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological wellbeing is defined as a mental state that reflects satisfaction, stress resistance, and the ability to self-actualise at work. The conservation of resources theory explains that wellbeing increases when individuals acquire, protect, or maintain valuable resources (Hobfoll, 1989). In the work context, HR strategies are a significant external resource. These strategies include preventive interventions (e.g., stress management training), social reinforcement (peer support), and adaptive work design (time and workload flexibility).

Research by Liu et al. (2023) shows that job resources facilitated by HR management contribute directly to increased work engagement and employee wellbeing. The more responsive HR policies are to the dynamic needs of employees, the greater the contribution to psychological wellbeing. Therefore, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: Effective human resource strategies positively influence employees' psychological wellbeing.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a *systematic literature review* (SLR) approach to collate and synthesise previous scientific findings related to the relationship between human resource strategies, burnout, and

psychological well-being. This approach allows researchers to explore empirical and conceptual evidence in a comprehensive, systematic, and replicable manner. This SLR procedure follows the 2020 version of the *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses* (PRISMA) framework, which provides guidelines for improving reporting transparency and reducing potential bias in literature selection (Page et al., 2021).

Literature Sources and Criteria

Literature sources in this study were obtained from various reputable scientific journal databases, including Scopus, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and Taylor & Francis, which were selected to provide peer-reviewed articles from highly reputable journals. In addition, the search also included national journals that have been indexed by SINTA 1 and SINTA 2 in an effort to capture relevant local perspectives. The inclusion criteria included articles that explicitly addressed at least one of the three main variables- HR strategies, burnout, or psychological well-being- with both conceptual and empirical approaches in English or Indonesian and available in full text. Articles that were not peer-reviewed, such as editorials, policy reports, or popular news, as well as publications with a focus outside the context of organisational and occupational psychology, were excluded from the analysis process (Siddaway, Wood, & Hedges, 2019).

Search and Selection Procedure

The search process was conducted systematically using a combination of Boolean keywords: ("human resource strategy" OR "HRM practices") AND ("burnout" OR "emotional exhaustion") AND ("psychological well-being" OR "employee well-being"). After the initial search stage, all results were evaluated through two stages of filtering. Firstly, a selection was made based on the appropriateness of the title and abstract to the focus of the study. Secondly, a further selection was made by reading the entire content of the articles to assess the relevance of the content and the quality of the methodology used. Only articles that met the standards of academic quality and appropriateness to the scope of the study were then selected for further analysis. This procedure was carried out by referring to the four stages of PRISMA, namely identification, screening, eligibility evaluation, and final inclusion (Page et al., 2021).

Analysis Technique

The collected data were analysed using the *thematic synthesis* approach, a method that groups findings based on central themes that emerged from the literature data. The analysis stage involved extracting key information from each article (such as author name, year, methodology, variables studied, and main results), then open coding to identify common patterns. Afterwards, themes were classified into relevant theoretical frameworks, particularly the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The results of this analysis were then presented in the form of a narrative synthesis that summarised the relationships between variables, trends in results, and research gaps that can be used as recommendations for future studies.

Validity and Credibility

The validity of the review process was maintained by applying the principles of PRISMA to ensure each step was carried out systematically and traceable. The credibility of the article was assessed by considering the journal's reputation, clarity of methodology, and relevance and consistency of findings to the focus of the study. To ensure objective interpretation, results were discussed with experts in HR management and organisational psychology through *peer debriefing* techniques. With these steps, the academic integrity and scientific quality of the study results can be optimally guaranteed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
HR Practices as a Bundle of Effective Interventions

A systematic review of more than 30 studies, including meta-analyses and systematic reviews, showed that an integrated package of human resource (HR) policies-including Employee Assistance

Programs (EAPs), work flexibility, supportive leadership training, and mental wellbeing programs, significantly reduced burnout and strengthening employees' psychological wellbeing. To illustrate, a study of a group of hospital employees showed that a combination of EAP and flexible work shift arrangements reduced psychological distress in both the short and long term and doubled levels of work engagement compared to pre-intervention conditions. The consistency of these results emphasises the importance of designing HRM interventions that are explicitly oriented towards wellbeing rather than merely improving work efficiency.

Mechanism of Action: Job Demands-Resources (JD-R)

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) conceptual framework is a key foothold in understanding the effectiveness of HRM strategies in this context. Cross-sector studies confirm that job demands-such as heavy workloads and emotional distress, do not necessarily lead to burnout if adequate job resources are available, such as supportive supervision, work autonomy, and constructive feedback. Meta-analyses conducted by Green, Mostafa, and Parent-Rocheleau (2022) and Hu, Schaufeli, and Taris (2021) show that the provision of such resources markedly reduces burnout while increasing psychological wellbeing and work engagement. Thus, these results reinforce the hypothesis that strategic and development-orientated HR practices can serve as an effective buffer in the face of high work stress.

Contextual Factors: Organisational Climate and Leadership

Organisational context, particularly psychosocial safety climate (PSC) and leadership style are critical factors in the successful implementation of HR interventions. Research by Dollard and Bakker (2010) showed that organisations with high levels of PSC reduced burnout by 4-4.5% and increased engagement by 6%. These findings reflect the importance of employees' collective perception that their organisation truly prioritises mental health and wellbeing. In addition, transformational and supportive leadership styles were shown to contribute significantly to the creation of supportive psychosocial resources. The studies of Fernet et al. (2015) and Nielsen and Daniels (2016) underline that leaders who are able to create empathic and supportive working relationships can reduce the impact of work stress and sustainably improve employee wellbeing and engagement.

The Role of Digital Technology

Digital interventions such as mindfulness apps and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) are now part of contemporary approaches to managing workplace wellbeing. Research by Carolan et al. (2017) showed that digital app-based interventions had a moderate effect (g ≈ 0.3-0.4) on improving wellbeing, especially when supported with interpersonal mentoring or brief guidance from professionals. This confirms that while technology offers advantages in terms of scalability and accessibility, long-term effectiveness is highly dependent on the integration of in-depth and sustained interpersonal approaches. Thus, a successful HR strategy in the digital realm demands the integration of technology and authentic human engagement.

Discussion

Relationship between HR Strategy and Burnout

The results of the literature review show that comprehensively designed human resource strategies, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), work flexibility, supportive leadership training, and psychosocial support, are proven to reduce burnout. A meta-analysis conducted by Chen (2021) and the follow-up report "Advancing the Field of EAP Research" (2022) confirmed that EAPs have a positive impact in reducing work stress and emotional distress that can lead to burnout. However, Compton and McManus' (2015) study suggests that the effectiveness of EAP is often hampered by low utilisation rates, less than 10%, and is influenced by programme design and organisational culture.

This study broadens the understanding by asserting that an integrated bundle of HR strategies, including EAP, flexitime, and leadership training, is more effective than a single intervention approach. Thus, this holistic approach provides more stable and sustainable results in reducing burnout, especially in high-demand work environments.

The Relationship between HR Strategy and Psychological Wellbeing

Various previous studies support the positive relationship between HR strategies and improved psychological wellbeing of employees. For example, research by Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) showed that work flexibility policies, supervisor support, and work-family policies have a direct impact on employees' positive feelings, engagement, and job satisfaction. In addition, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) and Conservation of Resources (COR) theories also reinforce the view that increasing job resources can significantly offset the negative influence of job demands on psychological wellbeing (Hu et al., 2021; Green et al., 2022).

However, different findings were reported by Krishane Patel et al. (2022), who evaluated the effectiveness of a CBT-based digital intervention. Although the intervention had a positive impact on reducing depression and stress symptoms, the study indicated that without personalised assistance or guidance, the digital intervention had limitations in improving overall engagement. Therefore, this study emphasises that HR strategies should be integrated, including digital interventions combined with direct engagement from managers or professionals to achieve optimal wellbeing outcomes.

The Role of Moderators: Organisational Climate and Leadership Style

The impact of HR strategies cannot be separated from the organisational context, particularly the psychosocial safety climate (PSC) and leadership style. Dollard and Bakker (2010) showed that organisations with high PSC have a lower tendency to experience burnout and higher employee engagement. This is due to the collective perception that organisations value workers' mental health and wellbeing as a top priority.

On the other hand, transformational and supportive leadership styles are also important catalysts in creating supportive psychosocial resources. Studies by Fernet et al. (2015) and Nielsen & Daniels (2016) show that empathic leaders who are able to provide emotional support significantly moderate the effects of work demands on burnout while promoting better engagement and psychological wellbeing. In this context, this study offers differentiation by highlighting that the effectiveness of HR strategies is highly dependent on an organisation's readiness to build a pro-being culture and facilitate adaptive and supportive leadership.

Digital Interventions: Effectiveness and Limitations

Digital interventions in mental health management are now an important part of modern HR strategies. A meta-analysis published by the *Journal of Medical Internet Research* (2017) showed that the use of CBT-based digital applications had a moderate effect on improving psychological wellbeing and work effectiveness. However, a recent study by Zuberbuhler et al. (2025), in the form of a realist synthesis, highlighted that the effectiveness of digital interventions is highly dependent on contextual factors such as individual digital literacy, organisational culture, and the availability of direct support.

Therefore, this study's results recommend a hybrid approach that combines digital technologies with direct interpersonal interventions. With such integration, organisations can maximise the reach, effectiveness, and sustainability of their HR strategies. This approach shows that success is not only determined by the tools or technologies used but also by the quality of the underlying interpersonal relationships.

CONCLUSION

This literature review confirms that human resource management (HRM) strategies designed in an integrated manner play a crucial role in reducing burnout and improving employees' psychological

wellbeing. Approaches that include Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), work flexibility, supportive leadership training, and organisation-based mental wellbeing programs have been found to be more effective than partial or one-dimensional interventions. The success of such interventions depends not only on the existence of the programme. However, it is also strongly influenced by the internal conditions of the organisation, particularly the psychosocial safety climate and empathic and supportive leadership styles. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework proved to be a relevant theoretical approach in explaining the dynamics of the relationship between job demands, psychosocial resource availability, and employees' psychological balance at work.

From a theoretical perspective, this study makes an important contribution to enriching the literature on human resource management and psychological wellbeing by emphasising the importance of the linkages between HR strategies, organisational climate, and leadership styles. The findings not only strengthen the relevance of JD-R and Conservation of Resources (COR) theories but also open up opportunities for the development of new theories that integrate aspects of digital wellbeing in modern HRM practices. Practically, this study encourages organisations to implement an integrated HRM strategy, combining digital interventions and interpersonal support as a complementary strategy. An organisational culture that supports wellbeing and leaders' ability to foster supportive relationships is key to optimising the impact of such policies. In addition, the successful implementation of digital strategies also depends on the level of digital literacy of employees, technological readiness, and the suitability of the managerial approach used.

This research has several limitations that need to be considered. Firstly, most of the studies analysed in this review are from the healthcare sector and Western countries, so potential contextual bias is inevitable, and generalisation of the results to other sectors or organisational cultures needs to be done with caution. Secondly, not many studies utilised a longitudinal design, so the long-term effects of HR interventions on burnout and psychological wellbeing cannot be comprehensively confirmed. Thirdly, limited access to paid journal sources limits the scope of literature exploration on some topics, allowing for important findings that have not been captured in this study.

Based on these limitations, it is recommended that future research be conducted using a longitudinal approach to assess the sustainability of the effects of HR strategies on burnout and employee wellbeing over time. Research also needs to further explore the role of local work culture as a moderating factor, especially in the context of organisations in developing countries that have unique challenges. In addition, the development of a comprehensive evaluation framework to measure the effectiveness of hybrid interventions - combining digital technology and interpersonal support - could be an important contribution to both academia and practitioners. Future research is also recommended to include the perspectives of employees directly to understand their perceptions of existing HR programmes and tailor intervention designs to be more responsive to actual workplace needs.

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