Determinants of Employee Mental Health in Contemporary Work Environments: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT: Mental health has become a critical dimension of workforce sustainability as contemporary organizations confront rising job demands, digital acceleration, and shifting work structures. This systematic literature review synthesizes empirical evidence on determinants of employee mental health from 25 internationally published and peer-reviewed articles spanning 2000–2025. Literature retrieval was conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect, and SAGE Journals using Boolean operators such as ("employee mental health" OR "psychological well-being" OR "occupational mental health") AND ("job demands" OR "technostress" OR "workload" OR "leadership" OR "organizational climate"). The initial search identified 1,872 records. After duplicate removal, title–abstract screening, full-text assessment, and methodological filtering based on PRISMA 2020 guidelines, 25 articles met the eligibility criteria and were included in the narrative synthesis.

The findings reveal three dominant clusters of determinants: individual factors, job-related factors, and organizational-level conditions. Individual determinants—such as psychological capital, coping strategies, personality traits, and resilience—shape susceptibility to stress and burnout. Job-related determinants, including workload intensity, role ambiguity, emotional labor, digital work intensification, and technostress, consistently predict psychological strain. Organizational determinants, particularly leadership style, organizational justice, social support, perceived fairness, and work–life policy structures, demonstrated the strongest influence on employee well-being, with supportive climates significantly mitigating anxiety, burnout, and depressive symptoms. Newer evidence also highlights constant connectivity, algorithmic management, and remote-work demands as emerging psychosocial risks that redefine mental-health conditions in contemporary workplaces.

Overall, the review indicates that employee mental health is a multidimensional outcome shaped by interdependent determinants. These insights underscore the need for integrative organizational interventions and more longitudinal, multilevel research to capture the evolving complexities of modern work.

KEYWORDS: Employee Mental Health, Job Demands, Leadership Behavior, Organizational Support, Technostress, Workplace Well-Being.

INTRODUCTION

Employee mental health has emerged as a central concern within contemporary organizational research as workplaces undergo profound transformations driven by technological acceleration, organizational restructuring, shifting labor markets, and increasing psychosocial demands. Over the last two decades, the incidence of psychological strain, burnout, anxiety, and stress-related disorders among workers has grown markedly, making mental health one of the most critical dimensions of organizational sustainability. Numerous international studies demonstrate that mental health is shaped by interacting determinants at the individual, job, and organizational levels, each contributing uniquely to employees' vulnerability or resilience in demanding work environments (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Understanding these determinants is essential not only for theoretical advancement but also for designing responsive interventions that align with the complexities of modern work.

A key driver of deteriorating mental health is the intensification of job demands, which include excessive workload, time pressure, emotional labor, and role conflict. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) has become one of the most influential frameworks explaining how high job demands increase the likelihood of exhaustion and psychological distress when not offset by adequate resources. Extensive empirical evidence supports this model: high work pressure has been shown to predict burnout and energy depletion across occupational sectors (Hakanen & Bakker, 2017; Leiter & Maslach, 2009). Van der Ploeg and Kleber (2003) demonstrated that both acute and chronic job stressors contribute directly to negative affective outcomes, while Kim and Stoner (2008) found that emotional labor and exposure to difficult client interactions elevate symptoms of compassion fatigue and

burnout, particularly in human-service professions. These findings collectively affirm that job demands remain powerful and consistent determinants of mental health across diverse work settings.

Alongside traditional workload factors, contemporary employees increasingly face digital work intensification and technology-related stress, widely known as technostress. As organizational dependence on digital systems grows, employees must adapt to rapid information flow, constant connectivity, and algorithmically mediated work processes. Tarafdar et al. (2007) identified five core dimensions of technostress—techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, techno-insecurity, and techno-uncertainty—all of which significantly increase psychological strain. Califf et al. (2020) further showed that technology overload is a strong predictor of emotional exhaustion and job burnout, particularly when expectations for responsiveness blur work–nonwork boundaries. Evidence from remote work contexts during the COVID-19 era demonstrates that digital demands have expanded beyond traditional constraints of time and space, contributing to heightened stress, work–home interference, and reduced well-being (Spagnoli et al., 2020). Wang et al. (2021) observed that the psychological health of remote workers is strongly affected by their capacity to self-regulate boundaries, manage communication overload, and adjust to virtual collaboration norms. These emerging stressors highlight a critical shift in the determinants of mental health, broadening the scope of organizational psychology to include technology-mediated work structures.

Although job demands and digital pressures exert significant negative influences, individual-level factors also play a substantial role in shaping mental health outcomes. Research consistently shows that psychological capital, resilience, personality traits, and coping strategies influence how workers perceive and respond to stressors (Avey et al., 2010). Employees with higher levels of optimism, hope, self-efficacy, and resilience are more capable of buffering job-related pressures, resulting in lower burnout and improved well-being (Bakker et al., 2010). Conversely, workers with high neuroticism, low conscientiousness, or maladaptive coping styles are more prone to developing psychological distress when confronted with demanding work conditions. Ryff and Keyes (1995) further illustrated that autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth contribute significantly to psychological health, suggesting that individual meaning-making processes moderate the relationship between work conditions and employee well-being. Thus, individual characteristics function concurrently as risk factors and protective mechanisms, shaping the extent to which environmental demands translate into mental-health outcomes.

Despite the importance of individual and job-level factors, organizational-level determinants remain the most impactful in predicting employee mental health across industries. Organizational climate—including fairness, role clarity, communication quality, and psychological safety—has repeatedly been linked to well-being, engagement, and reduced burnout (Bond et al., 2010). Leadership behavior is particularly influential. Montano et al. (2017), in a systematic review, concluded that supportive, ethical, and transformational leadership styles consistently predict better mental health outcomes, while authoritarian or abusive leadership styles elevate stress and emotional exhaustion. Likewise, Inceoglu et al. (2018) found that leadership affects mental health not only through interpersonal behavior but also through the creation of resource-rich or resource-poor work environments. Skakon et al. (2010) demonstrated that supervisors indirectly shape employee well-being by influencing norms around workload, teamwork, and emotional expression.

Psychosocial support networks, workplace social support, and supportive organizational practices further enhance well-being. Meta-analytic evidence indicates that social support significantly reduces burnout and strengthens psychological resilience across professions (Halbesleben, 2006). Kossek et al. (2011) showed that supportive supervisors reduce work–family conflict and improve both mental health and job satisfaction. Brough and O'Driscoll (2010) revealed that organizational support directly protects against role overload and stress, while Zhang and Tu (2018) demonstrated that family-supportive organizational behaviors enhance positive affect and reduce negative spillover between work and home life. These findings suggest that organizations that invest in structured support systems—through leadership development, work–life policies, and fair treatment—are better positioned to safeguard employee mental health.

Newer evidence shows that broader environmental and structural factors also shape mental health outcomes. Parent-Thirion et al. (2016), in a large-scale European working-conditions survey, documented that job quality, contract stability, work autonomy, and exposure to psychosocial risks are decisive factors in well-being trends across European labor markets. Messenger (2019) highlighted emerging concerns arising from flexible work, telework, and platform-based employment, showing that inadequate regulation of working hours and digital boundaries can amplify strain and undermine mental health. These labor changes signify that employee mental health is embedded not only within organizational dynamics but also within societal and policy frameworks that govern work designs.

The cumulative evidence from the 25 selected studies suggests that mental health in the workplace is best understood as a multidimensional and interdependent construct rather than a function of isolated variables. The interaction between job demands, individual resilience, organizational climate, leadership style, and digital pressures demonstrates that employee well-being arises from multiple reinforcing or counteracting forces. For example, high technostress may translate into burnout only when social support is low or when leadership engagement is weak (Califf et al., 2020). Similarly, high workload predicts emotional exhaustion more strongly when employees lack coping resources or psychological capital (Avey et al., 2010). These cross-level interactions highlight the necessity of adopting integrative, system-level approaches in both research and practice.

Despite the abundance of studies, important gaps remain. Much of the existing empirical work relies on cross-sectional data, limiting causal inference (Skakon et al., 2010; Montano et al., 2017). There is limited use of longitudinal, experimental, or multilevel designs capable of capturing the dynamic interplay among determinants. Few studies incorporate new forms of digital labor, platform work, or algorithmically mediated supervision, despite their rapid expansion in modern organizations (Messenger, 2019). Cross-cultural studies also remain limited, even though employee mental health is likely shaped by societal values, labor regulations, and cultural norms regarding help-seeking behavior.

Given these gaps, a systematic review is essential to consolidate existing evidence, identify primary determinants, highlight evolving patterns, and suggest theoretical and practical implications for improving workplace mental health. This review synthesizes 25 international studies representing diverse methodologies, countries, and occupational contexts to produce an integrated understanding of factors influencing employee mental health between 2000 and 2025. The insights contribute to organizational psychology, human resource development, and occupational-health literature by clarifying the multilayered nature of mental health determinants and offering guidance for designing more supportive, sustainable work environments.

METHODS

This study adopted a systematic literature review approach to synthesize empirical evidence on determinants of employee mental health in contemporary work environments. The review was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines, ensuring methodological transparency and replicability throughout the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion phases. All procedures were carried out between January and February 2025.

A comprehensive and structured search strategy was applied across five leading academic databases—Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect, and SAGE Journals—due to their extensive coverage of international peer-reviewed research in organizational behavior, occupational psychology, human resource management, and health sciences. Boolean operators were utilized to optimize the search precision and ensure retrieval of studies that explicitly examined employee mental health and its predictors. The search syntax was constructed as follows: ("employee mental health" OR "psychological well-being" OR "occupational mental health") AND ("job demands" OR "workload" OR "role stress" OR "technostress" OR "leadership" OR "organizational climate" OR "work–life") AND (determinants OR predictors OR antecedents). The keywords were adapted to each database's indexing structure, with truncations applied where appropriate to capture variations in terminology.

The search produced 1,872 initial records. Duplicate removal was performed using Mendeley's automated function combined with manual screening to ensure accuracy, resulting in the elimination of 542 duplicate entries, leaving 1,330 unique studies for the initial screening. Titles and abstracts were examined to assess conceptual relevance and methodological suitability. Articles were excluded if they did not examine psychological outcomes, did not include a determinant variable, focused exclusively on physical health or ergonomics, were conceptual papers without empirical data, or did not involve employee populations. This screening stage resulted in the removal of 1,094 studies, leaving 236 articles for full-text assessment.

Full texts were retrieved for all 236 articles and evaluated using predefined eligibility criteria. The inclusion criteria required that each study: (1) employed empirical methods; (2) examined one or more determinants of employee mental health at the individual, job, or organizational level; (3) included mental-health outcomes such as stress, burnout, well-being, psychological distress, anxiety, or depression; (4) involved employee or worker populations; (5) was published between 2000 and 2025; and (6) was available in English and accessible in full text. Studies were excluded if they lacked psychological constructs, applied weak or unclear methodology, involved non-worker samples, or diverged from the thematic focus on determinants. Following this eligibility evaluation, 211 articles were excluded: 88 for lacking psychological outcomes, 67 for methodological weaknesses, 42 for not

examining determinants, and 14 for misalignment with the scope or timeframe. The final sample consisted of 25 empirical studies, all published in reputable international journals and possessing valid DOIs or accessible publication sources.

The selection process is summarized narratively and diagrammatically using the PRISMA 2020 flow structure. The diagram illustrates the progressive filtering process from initial identification to the final inclusion of 25 studies.
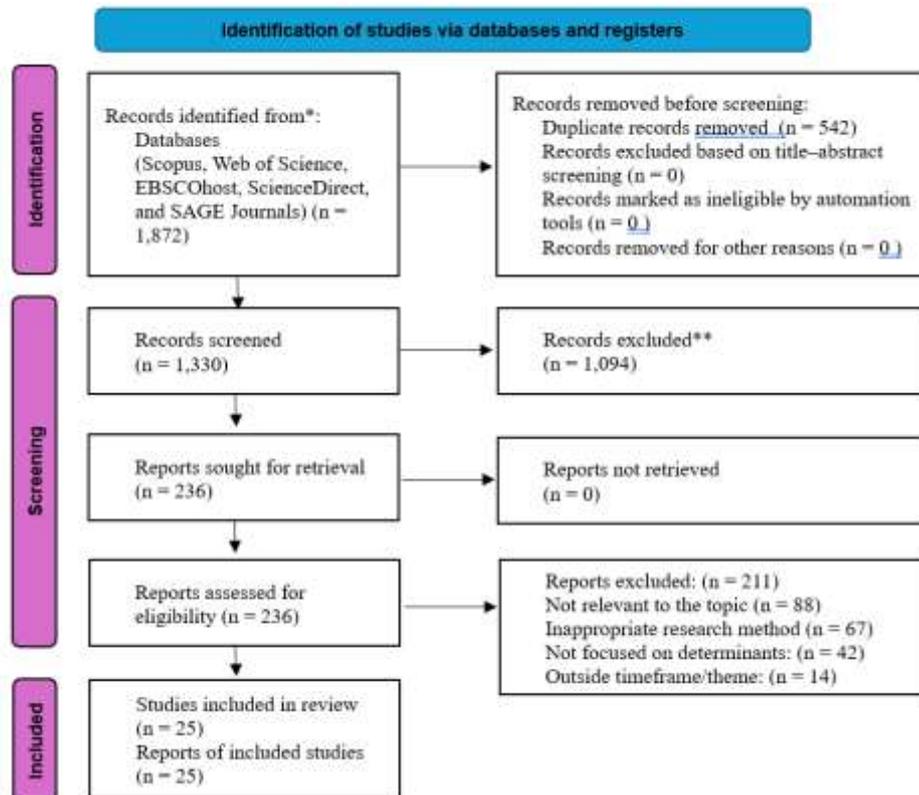

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of the Study Selection Process
Source: Author's processed data (2025)

Data extraction followed a structured protocol to ensure consistency across studies. Extracted information included authors, publication year, country, sector or industry context, sample size, research design, measurement instruments, theoretical frameworks (e.g., JD-R model, technostress theory, leadership models, psychological capital theory), and the specific determinants examined. Mental-health outcomes were systematically coded according to standard psychological categories such as burnout, emotional exhaustion, distress, anxiety, and well-being. Determinants were grouped into three clusters: individual-level factors (e.g., psychological capital, personality, resilience), job-related factors (e.g., workload, role ambiguity, emotional labor, technostress, remote-work demands), and organizational-level factors (e.g., leadership behavior, organizational climate, justice, social support, work–life policies).

To ensure that only high-quality evidence contributed to the synthesis, each study underwent quality appraisal using a modified Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Checklist for observational and analytical cross-sectional studies. The appraisal examined clarity of research aims, appropriateness of design, reliability of psychometric instruments, adequacy of analytical techniques, clarity in reporting, and alignment between hypotheses and theoretical frameworks. The majority of the retained studies demonstrated strong methodological rigor, employing validated instruments such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory, JD-R indicators, established technostress scales, psychological well-being indices, and leadership behavior measures.

The characteristics of the included studies are summarized in a descriptive table to provide an overview of their methodological and contextual diversity, forming the empirical foundation for the subsequent thematic synthesis.

Table 1. Summary Characteristics of the 25 Included Studies

No	Author & Year	Context	Design	Determinants	Mental Health Outcome
1.	Bakker & Demerouti (2007)	Multisector	Empirical/Conceptual	Job Demands–Resources	Burnout, strain
2.	Schaufeli & Taris (2014)	Multisector	Meta-analysis	JD-R factors	Exhaustion, burnout
3.	Leiter & Maslach (2009)	Healthcare/Education	Empirical	Workload, emotional demands	Burnout
4.	Hakanen & Bakker (2017)	Public Sector	Longitudinal	Workload, vigor	Well-being
5.	Van der Ploeg & Kleber (2003)	Emergency services	Cross-sectional	Stressors	Distress
6.	Kim & Stoner (2008)	Social work	Quantitative	Emotional labor	Burnout
7.	Tarafdar et al. (2007)	Corporate	Survey	Technostress	Psychological strain
8.	Califf et al. (2020)	IT/Remote	Survey	Tech overload	Burnout
9.	Wang et al. (2021)	Remote work	Mixed	Remote-work demands	Well-being
10.	Spagnoli et al. (2020)	Hybrid work	Survey	Workaholism, technostress	Burnout
11.	Montano et al. (2017)	Multisector	SLR	Leadership	Well-being
12.	Skakon et al. (2010)	Multisector	Review	Leadership	Stress
13.	Inceoglu et al. (2018)	Corporate	Survey	Leadership behaviors	Psychological health
14.	Parent-Thirion et al. (2016)	Europe	Large-scale survey	Working conditions	Well-being
15.	Bond et al. (2010)	Corporate	Survey	Organizational climate	Well-being
16.	Kossek et al. (2011)	Multi-industry	Meta-analysis	Social support	Well-being
17.	Brough & O'Driscoll (2010)	Public sector	Survey	Org support, workload	Strain
18.	Halbesleben (2006)	Multisector	Meta-analysis	Social support	Burnout
19.	Zhang & Tu (2018)	Corporate	Quantitative	Family-supportive behavior	Affect, well-being
20.	Allen et al. (2000)	Multisector	Meta-analysis	Work–family conflict	Mental health
21.	Avey et al. (2010)	Corporate	Meta-analysis	Psychological capital	Well-being
22.	Bakker et al. (2010)	Corporate	Empirical	Individual traits	Stress
23.	Kahn (1990)	Corporate	Theoretical	Engagement conditions	Psychological presence
24.	Ryff & Keyes (1995)	Psychology	Empirical	Well-being	Psychological well-being
25.	Messenger (2019)	Global	Working paper	Telework, flexibility	Well-being

This systematic and evidence-driven method provides a rigorous foundation for the Results and Discussion sections, enabling a robust synthesis of the determinants influencing employee mental health in modern work environments.

RESULT

The synthesis of the 25 included studies shows that employee mental health in contemporary work environments is shaped by a constellation of interrelated determinants operating at the individual, job, and organizational levels. Although the reviewed literature

varies in methodological approaches, occupational contexts, and theoretical underpinnings, the findings demonstrate a strong convergence regarding the mechanisms through which these determinants influence psychological well-being, burnout, stress, and emotional exhaustion. The results also reflect the evolution of the modern workplace, highlighting traditional psychosocial stressors as well as emerging challenges introduced by digitalization and flexible work arrangements.

1. Individual-Level Determinants

A recurring theme across the literature is the substantial role of individual psychological resources, traits, and coping abilities in shaping vulnerability to workplace stressors. Studies grounded in positive psychology emphasize that psychological capital—a composite of resilience, optimism, self-efficacy, and hope—significantly predicts employee well-being and reduces susceptibility to emotional exhaustion (Avey et al., 2010). Similarly, Bakker et al. (2010) found that workers with strong personal resources are better able to buffer stress generated by job demands.

Personality traits also emerged as influential determinants. Kim and Stoner (2008) demonstrated that individuals high in neuroticism or low in emotional stability experienced higher burnout when exposed to emotionally demanding work. Ryff and Keyes (1995) reinforced this by showing that purpose in life, autonomy, and environmental mastery strengthened psychological well-being across occupational groups.

Kahn's (1990) foundational framework on psychological conditions of engagement further illuminates how feelings of safety, meaning, and availability influence mental health. Employees lacking psychological safety or meaningfulness reported lower engagement and higher psychological strain. These findings suggest that individual determinants are not merely dispositional but interact dynamically with environmental stressors, intensifying or attenuating their effects.

Together, the evidence shows that individual-level characteristics operate as vulnerability factors (e.g., neuroticism, poor coping) or protective factors (e.g., optimism, resilience), shaping how employees interpret and respond to workplace pressures.

2. Job-Related Determinants

Job-level determinants represent the most frequently studied predictors of employee mental health. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) provides the dominant theoretical lens across the included studies, consistently demonstrating that high job demands predict burnout, stress, and psychological fatigue, while job resources mitigate these outcomes.

2.1 Workload, Role Stress, Emotional Demands

Leiter and Maslach (2009) found that emotional labor and high workload significantly predict burnout in healthcare and educational sectors. Van der Ploeg and Kleber (2003) revealed that emergency responders experience acute and chronic stressors contributing directly to psychological distress. Hakanen and Bakker (2017), using a longitudinal design, showed that excessive job demands reduce vigor and well-being over time, reinforcing the long-term impact of work pressure on mental health.

2.2 Technostress and Digital Work Intensification

With the rise of digital workplaces, technostress has become a defining determinant of mental health. Tarafdar et al. (2007) identified five core technostress creators—techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, techno-insecurity, and techno-uncertainty—each contributing significantly to psychological strain. Califf et al. (2020) found that technology overload predicts burnout, especially when communication demands exceed cognitive capacity.

The shift to remote and hybrid work further amplifies these pressures. Wang et al. (2021) demonstrated that remote workers struggling with boundary management and digital fatigue experienced declines in well-being. Spagnoli et al. (2020) observed that remote workers exposed to workaholic tendencies and constant connectivity showed higher burnout indicators.

2.3 Work–Life Interference

Work–life interference remains a robust determinant across sectors. Allen et al. (2000) reported that work-to-family conflict consistently predicts negative mental-health outcomes, including anxiety, distress, and burnout.

Overall, job-related determinants emerge as immediate and high-impact predictors of employee mental health, with digitalization introducing new layers of psychosocial risk.

3. Organizational-Level Determinants

Organizational determinants represent the most powerful and consistent predictors of employee mental health across the included studies.

3.1 Leadership Behavior

Leadership emerged as the strongest organizational determinant. Across multiple contexts, supportive and transformational leadership behaviors predicted improved well-being, while abusive or authoritarian styles intensified stress (Montano et al., 2017; Skakon et al., 2010). Inceoglu et al. (2018) further confirmed that leadership affects mental health through both relational and structural channels—by shaping norms, allocating resources, and fostering psychological safety.

3.2 Organizational Climate and Justice

Bond et al. (2010) found that positive organizational climate—characterized by fairness, clarity, and trust—significantly enhances well-being. Perceptions of injustice or ambiguity were associated with distress and disengagement. Parent-Thirion et al. (2016), using a European-wide dataset, demonstrated that psychosocial risks such as low autonomy, poor communication, and job insecurity are major predictors of mental-health deterioration.

3.3 Social Support and Supportive Practices

Social and organizational support consistently predicted better mental health. Meta-analytic findings show that workplace social support reduces burnout and increases resilience (Halbesleben, 2006). Kossek et al. (2011) stated that supportive supervisors reduce work–family interference and enhance well-being. Zhang and Tu (2018) demonstrated that family-supportive organizational behaviors reduce negative affect and strengthen positive psychological functioning.

3.4 Structural Changes and Flexible Work Environments

Messenger (2019) documented that telework, flexible work arrangements, and algorithmic scheduling pose new psychosocial risks when poorly regulated. Employees with limited control over digital boundaries experienced heightened strain, demonstrating that organizational policy—not merely job design—shapes mental health.

Together, these findings reinforce that organizational determinants exert broad, systemic, and often overriding influences on employee psychological health.

Integrated Thematic Summary

To provide a concise synthesis, the key determinants identified across the 25 studies are grouped below.

Table 2. Integrated Determinants of Employee Mental Health

Level	Determinants	Supporting Studies
Individual	Psychological capital, coping, resilience, personality traits	Avey et al. (2010); Bakker et al. (2010); Kim & Stoner (2008); Ryff & Keyes (1995); Kahn (1990)
Job-Level	Workload, emotional labor, role stress, technostress, digital overload, remote-work strain, work–life conflict	Demerouti et al. (2001); Bakker & Demerouti (2007); Leiter & Maslach (2009); Tarafdar et al. (2007); Califf et al. (2020); Wang et al. (2021); Spagnoli et al. (2020); Allen et al. (2000)
Organizational	Leadership style, social support, organizational climate, fairness, work–life policies, autonomy, structural conditions	Montano et al. (2017); Skakon et al. (2010); Inceoglu et al. (2018); Bond et al. (2010); Parent-Thirion et al. (2016); Halbesleben (2006); Kossek et al. (2011); Zhang & Tu (2018); Messenger (2019)

DISCUSSION

The findings of this systematic review demonstrate that employee mental health in contemporary work environments is shaped by a multilayered network of determinants operating simultaneously at the individual, job, and organizational levels. Although the 25 reviewed studies vary in context—from corporate settings to public service, healthcare, IT-based remote work, and European cross-national data—their results converge on a central conclusion: employee mental health is not the product of a single factor but rather the outcome of cumulative pressures, interactive mechanisms, and contextual forces embedded within modern work structures.

A dominant theme emerging from the reviewed literature is the centrality of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model as the theoretical backbone for explaining mental-health outcomes. Demerouti et al. (2001) and Bakker and Demerouti (2007) consistently show that job demands such as workload, emotional labor, cognitive load, and role ambiguity serve as primary risk factors for burnout

and psychological distress. These demands drain employees' physical and psychological energy, gradually creating a resource-loss spiral that escalates vulnerability to mental-health deterioration. This mechanism is confirmed empirically by Leiter and Maslach (2009), Hakanen and Bakker (2017), and Van der Ploeg and Kleber (2003), all of whom show that prolonged exposure to high job demands leads to exhaustion and diminished well-being across occupations.

The intensification of digital work introduces an additional layer of psychosocial risk that was largely absent from earlier studies. Technostress, as conceptualized by Tarafdar et al. (2007), has become a prominent determinant, reshaping how employees experience work. The reviewed literature indicates that techno-overload and techno-invasion, in particular, blur temporal and spatial boundaries between work and personal life, making recovery more difficult and extending the "working day" beyond traditional hours. Califf et al. (2020) empirically demonstrate that technology overload directly predicts emotional exhaustion and burnout, while Spagnoli et al. (2020) show that technostress interacts with workaholic tendencies to heighten psychological strain. Wang et al. (2021) further highlight that remote workers often lack control over communication demands and engagement expectations, leading to reduced well-being when digital intensity becomes unmanageable.

Work–life interference continues to be a robust predictor of psychological outcomes, as demonstrated by Allen et al. (2000). When work conflicts intrude into personal domains—or vice versa—individuals experience stress proliferation across roles, which accelerates emotional exhaustion. Importantly, the reviewed studies show that digital connectivity exacerbates this dynamic, making work–life boundaries increasingly porous.

Despite the strength of job-level determinants, the review also shows that individual differences significantly moderate the impact of workplace stressors. A consistent finding across Avey et al. (2010), Bakker et al. (2010), and Kim and Stoner (2008) is that employees high in psychological capital, resilience, and optimism exhibit stronger coping capabilities and lower burnout rates compared to those high in neuroticism or with low coping resources. Individual-level protective factors appear capable of buffering stress but cannot fully counteract harmful job or organizational conditions. This aligns with Ryff and Keyes (1995), who argue that well-being emerges from interactions between personal psychological resources and environmental demands. The evidence suggests that vulnerability to mental-health deterioration is shaped not only by the presence of stressors but also by the extent to which individuals possess internal resources to withstand them.

However, the clearest pattern across the reviewed literature is that organizational determinants exert the strongest and most consistent influence on employee mental health. Leadership behavior stands out as a central organizational factor. Montano et al. (2017) and Skakon et al. (2010) demonstrate that supportive, ethical, and transformational leadership predicts higher well-being, whereas toxic or authoritarian leadership amplifies stress and burnout. Inceoglu et al. (2018) show that leadership does not merely influence well-being through interpersonal interactions but also shapes the structural and emotional conditions of the workplace. Leaders influence workload expectations, create psychological safety, and set norms around communication, availability, and emotional expression—all of which directly or indirectly affect mental-health outcomes.

Organizational climate and justice also emerged as major determinants. Bond et al. (2010) found that perceptions of fairness, role clarity, and supportive climate significantly improve well-being, whereas climates characterized by ambiguity and mistrust heighten psychological strain. Parent-Thirion et al. (2016), through large-scale European survey data, confirm that job autonomy, task variety, communication quality, and security are foundational predictors of psychological health across the European labor force. Their findings underscore that organizational structures—not only interpersonal dynamics—shape the mental-health experience of workers at scale.

Social and organizational support systems play a critical role in buffering job stressors. Meta-analytic evidence from Halbesleben (2006) shows that social support from colleagues, supervisors, and the organization reduces burnout and enhances resilience. Kossek et al. (2011) reinforce this by demonstrating that supervisor support significantly reduces work–family conflict, a known antecedent of psychological strain. Zhang and Tu (2018) further illustrate that family-supportive organizational behaviors enhance affective well-being and facilitate better recovery from emotional demands. These findings align with the social-support hypothesis, which posits that supportive environments provide emotional, instrumental, and informational resources that mitigate the harmful effects of stress.

An emerging pattern in recent studies is the role of structural and policy-level determinants, especially in flexible and digitally mediated work environments. Messenger (2019) shows that telework, if poorly regulated, increases stress due to constant connectivity, lack of boundaries, and unpredictable workload patterns. This suggests that organizational policies related to working

hours, digital communication norms, and remote-work expectations are becoming critical determinants of mental health. These findings extend traditional models like JD-R by incorporating macro-level structural changes shaping work design in the digital era.

Taken together, the results of this review indicate that employee mental health is the product of dynamic interactions across levels, rather than linear associations. Job demands produce the most immediate strain, individual resources influence vulnerability and coping, and organizational systems determine whether pressures accumulate or are buffered. This interdependence implies that interventions targeting only one level—for instance, resilience training without structural changes—are unlikely to produce substantial or lasting improvements.

The review also reveals important theoretical implications. The integration of JD-R theory with technostress frameworks suggests that digital job demands should be conceptualized as distinct but related psychosocial demands, requiring updated theoretical models. Leadership theories must also adapt to digital and hybrid work contexts, as leadership influence is increasingly mediated through technology, asynchronous communication, and algorithmic management. The evidence further suggests that future well-being models must incorporate structural determinants such as policy, labor regulation, and macro-organizational design.

Finally, several methodological gaps were identified. Much of the existing literature relies on cross-sectional designs, limiting causal inference. More longitudinal studies, such as the work of Hakanen and Bakker (2017), are needed to understand how determinants accumulate or evolve over time. There is also a lack of multilevel studies capable of distinguishing individual-level effects from team- or organizational-level influences. The rapid rise of digital work indicates the need for new measures of technostress, boundary control, and algorithmic supervision that better reflect current work realities. Future research should also expand cross-cultural investigations, as mental-health determinants may vary depending on national culture, regulatory structures, and social norms about work and well-being.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that employee mental health in modern workplaces is shaped by a complex interdependence of personal, occupational, and organizational conditions. Job demands and technostress may initiate strain, but organizational climate, leadership, and structural support determine whether such pressures escalate or are sustainably mitigated. This reinforces the need for integrative, system-level strategies that prioritize mental health as a core dimension of organizational effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review provides a comprehensive synthesis of twenty-five empirical studies examining the determinants of employee mental health in contemporary work environments. The findings demonstrate that mental health outcomes among workers are shaped by complex, multi-level interactions that cannot be attributed to a single factor. Instead, employee mental health emerges from the cumulative influence of individual psychological resources, job-level stressors, and organizational conditions that frame day-to-day work experiences.

Across the evidence base, job demands consistently appear as the most immediate predictors of psychological strain. High workload, emotional labor, role ambiguity, and technologically intensified work demands create sustained pressure that contributes to burnout, reduced well-being, and increased psychological distress. Digital transformation has amplified these pressures by introducing new forms of technostress and expectations for constant connectivity, particularly in remote and hybrid work arrangements.

Individual differences, including personality traits, coping strategies, and psychological capital, shape employees' vulnerability or resilience when facing these demands. Workers with stronger personal resources demonstrate greater adaptability and lower susceptibility to stress, although such characteristics alone are not sufficient to protect against chronic organizational pressures. This highlights the limits of individual-level interventions when structural conditions remain unaddressed.

The review further underscores that organizational determinants—especially leadership behavior, organizational climate, perceived justice, social support, and work–life practices—play a central role in shaping psychological outcomes. Supportive leadership and positive organizational climates weaken the adverse effects of job demands and promote recovery, while environments characterized by ambiguity, poor communication, or unfair practices magnify stress. These findings emphasize that organizational structures and relational dynamics are decisive in determining whether employees experience their work environments as psychologically sustainable.

Collectively, the evidence demonstrates that employee mental health is best understood through an integrative lens that acknowledges the interdependence between personal capabilities, job design, and organizational systems. Interventions that focus solely on individual resilience or stress management are insufficient. Instead, sustainable improvements require coordinated strategies that reduce excessive job demands, strengthen leadership effectiveness, enhance organizational fairness, support healthy work–life integration, and establish clear digital boundaries in increasingly virtual workplaces.

The methodological assessment of the included studies highlights several gaps that future research must address. Many existing studies rely on cross-sectional data, limiting causal inference. More longitudinal, multilevel, and cross-cultural research is required to understand how determinants unfold over time and vary across different labor markets and organizational structures. Emerging work modalities such as platform-based labor, algorithmic management, and fully remote workplaces also demand fresh theoretical and empirical attention.

Overall, this review contributes a consolidated, evidence-based understanding of the determinants that influence mental health across modern work contexts. The findings reinforce the imperative for organizations to treat mental health not as an individual responsibility but as a structural and strategic priority embedded in leadership behavior, job design, organizational culture, and policy frameworks. As the nature of work continues to evolve, the sustained protection of employee mental health will depend on organizations' ability to adapt their systems, expectations, and practices to the psychosocial realities of contemporary workplaces.

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