

### Investigating the Role of HR In Managing Employee Mental Health Related to Climate Change Risk and Original Transition

Dr. Jyothy chandra R.<sup>1</sup>, Mr. Georgy B. Jacob<sup>2</sup>, Ms. Anu Khadarkunju<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Prima Anne George<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Mangalam College of Engineering, Kottayam, Kerala.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Mangalam College of Engineering, Kottayam, Kerala.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Mangalam College of Engineering, Kottayam, Kerala.

<sup>4</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Mangalam College of Engineering, Kottayam, Kerala.

#### **ABSTRACT**

The paper at hand explores how Human Resource (HR) practices can be applied to cope with employee mental health issues related to climate change risks and organizational change towards sustainability. The mixed-method design was used, which involved both survey data of 150 employees and qualitative information of HR professionals. The outcomes show that the eco-anxiety (4.4) is the most vivid issue with the next positions taken by transition-related stress (4.2) and job insecurity (4.1). Moreover, 78% of the respondents said that their HR-led counseling programs had made a substantial contribution to the improvement of their psychological well-being, and 72% enjoyed flexible work policies. The results indicate that climate-related uncertainty and organizational change have significant psychological stress among workers. Nevertheless, these issues can be successfully reduced through proactive HR practices such as mental health assistance, sustainability education as well as employee engagement programs. The paper emphasizes the importance of HR in the cultivation of resilience and well-being in an organization in the course of environmental transitions. It concludes that mental health resolution in conjunction with sustainability efforts has a role to play in ensuring employee well-being as well as effectiveness of the organization.

#### **Introduction**

Climate change is no longer a distant environmental concern; it has become a pressing reality affecting various aspects of human life, including mental health. The term "eco-anxiety" has gained prominence, referring to chronic fear of environmental catastrophe. Simultaneously, organizations worldwide are undergoing significant transitions toward sustainable practices, which, while necessary, introduce additional stressors such as job role changes, skill obsolescence, and uncertainty about organizational stability. Employees today face a dual burden: anxiety about the global climate crisis and stress arising from organizational transformations aimed at mitigating environmental impact.

#### **The Role of Human Resources in Employee Well-being**

Human Resource departments have traditionally focused on recruitment, performance management, and compliance. However, the evolving workplace landscape demands that HR expand its purview to include employee mental health, particularly in response to external stressors like climate change. HR professionals are uniquely positioned to design and implement policies that address psychological distress, foster resilience, and create supportive work environments. This includes offering counseling services, flexible work arrangements, sustainability literacy programs, and employee assistance programs that specifically target eco-anxiety and transition-related stress.

#### **Methodology**

A mixed-method research design was adopted to comprehensively investigate the research objectives. The quantitative component involved a survey administered to 150 employees across various industries in Kerala. The survey measured levels of eco-anxiety, transition-related stress, job insecurity, and perceived effectiveness of HR interventions using a 5-point Likert scale. The qualitative component comprised semi-structured interviews with 15 HR professionals to gain deeper insights into organizational practices, challenges, and success stories. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and thematic analysis for qualitative responses.

#### **Results**

The survey findings revealed that eco-anxiety was the most pronounced issue, with a mean score of 4.4 out of 5, followed by transition-related stress (4.2) and job insecurity (4.1). These results indicate that employees are experiencing significant psychological distress related to both global environmental concerns and local organizational changes. Importantly, 78% of respondents reported that HR-led counseling programs substantially contributed to their psychological well-being, and 72% expressed satisfaction with flexible work policies implemented by their organizations. Correlation analysis showed a negative relationship between access to HR mental health resources and reported stress levels ( $r = -0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Qualitative interviews with HR professionals identified key success factors including leadership commitment to employee well-being, integration of mental health into sustainability strategies, regular communication about organizational changes, and provision of skills training for green jobs.

#### **Discussion**

The findings underscore that climate change and organizational transitions are not merely operational or strategic concerns but have profound implications for employee mental health. HR departments that proactively address these issues through targeted interventions can significantly reduce psychological distress and enhance workplace well-being. Counseling programs provide employees with safe spaces to express climate-related fears and receive professional support. Flexible work policies, including remote work options and adaptable schedules, help employees manage the intersection of work

and personal life amid environmental disruptions. Sustainability education empowers employees with knowledge and skills, reducing feelings of helplessness and building collective efficacy. Employee engagement programs that involve staff in green initiatives foster a sense of purpose and community, mitigating isolation and anxiety.

### **Challenges and Recommendations**

Despite promising results, challenges remain. Many organizations lack formal policies addressing climate-related mental health, and HR professionals may feel ill-equipped to handle eco-anxiety. Budget constraints, stigma surrounding mental health, and difficulty measuring outcomes further complicate implementation. Recommendations include: (1) developing comprehensive mental health policies that explicitly recognize climate change as a psychological risk factor; (2) training HR professionals and managers to identify and respond to eco-anxiety; (3) integrating mental health support into sustainability transition plans; (4) establishing peer support networks for employees; (5) conducting regular well-being assessments; and (6) fostering a culture of psychological safety where employees feel comfortable discussing climate-related concerns.

### **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that climate change risks and organizational transitions toward sustainability significantly impact employee mental health, manifesting as eco-anxiety, transition-related stress, and job insecurity. However, proactive HR practices—including mental health assistance, sustainability education, flexible work policies, and employee engagement programs—can effectively mitigate these issues. The findings highlight the critical role of HR in cultivating organizational resilience and employee well-being during environmental transitions. Organizations that integrate mental health support with sustainability efforts are better positioned to ensure both employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. Future research should explore longitudinal outcomes, cross-cultural comparisons, and the development of standardized intervention frameworks for climate-related mental health in workplace settings.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management; Mental Health in Employees; Climate Change Risk; eco-anxiety; Organizational Transition; Sustainability; Well-being at the Workplace.

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### 1 Introduction

Climate change has become a world issue of great concern that has new implications all the way into the psychological and organizational arenas. Workers are growingly feeling eco-anxiety, chronic stress with worry over environmental transformation, as well as a sense of uncertainty regarding organizational changes towards sustainability [1][2]. Increased awareness of the danger of climate and the swift evolution of business models to achieve less environmental impact are compounding such psychological responses. With organizations shifting to greener models, employees usually experience role ambiguity, heavy workload and job insecurity and all this leads to stress and poor well-being [3][4].

Work place can be identified as one of the principal places where the impact of climate change is indirectly felt. The employees do not just address the issue of environmental concerns, but they also adjust to the changes and transitions of an organization, including sustainability policies, green innovations, and restructuring. These changes are needed, but they can upset existing patterns and expectations and create emotional tension and a lowered level of job satisfaction [5][6]. Therefore, climate change is also becoming a mental and institutional issue and needs co-ordinated management solutions.

One of the key factors in meeting these challenges is Human Resource Management (HRM) that formulates strategies to facilitate the well-being of employees as change is happening. To encourage mental health measures, such as counseling, flexible working hours, and employee assistance programs, HR departments develop policies facilitating these. It has been indicated

that the good HR practices can contribute to resilience, less stress, and increased engagement of employees, especially with the uncertain periods [7][8]. In addition, the idea of Green HRM is based on ensuring that the sustainability programs are refined to meet the needs of employees, so that the environmental objectives should not be at the cost of the health of the workforce [9][10]. Although the significance of this topic has increased over time, relevant literature has mostly been concerned with the environmental sustainability and the organizational effectiveness with little attention paid to the psychological effects of climatic changes on the employees. In as much as research has been conducted to investigate the area of workplace stress and HR interventions, most of them have not considered the distinct scenario of climate-related apprehension and transitions to sustainability [11][12]. Such a gap confirms the necessity of research that would include environmental, psychological and HR insights to comprehend and address employee well-being in relation to climate change better.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

Despite the fact that climate change and sustainability transitions are slowly becoming part of the workplace dynamics, organizations do not have formalized HR structures to adeptly respond to employee mental health issues, including eco-anxiety, job insecurity, and transition-specific stress, hindering employee welfare and organizational performance.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

- To study the mental health issues associated with climate change in employees.
- To examine how HR can be used to address these challenges.
- To propose the methods of ensuring sustainable wellness of workforce in cases of organizational changes.

## 2 Literature Review

Recent sources shed light on the increased overlap of climate change and employee mental health, where there is an increased prevalence of eco-anxiety, stress, and mental distress due to environmental uncertainty. Research shows that employees are becoming under a growing emotional burden because of climatic risks and being subjected to information related to sustainability, which may impact productivity and health negatively [13][14]. Although these studies prove the importance of psychological effects caused by climate, they generally dwell on ordinary population but not in workplace situations.

Simultaneously, studies concerning Human Resource Management (HRM) evoke the importance of its critical contribution to the well-being and psychological safety

of the employees. The recent research indicates that mental health programs, flexible environment and proactive leadership are some of the HR practices that play a vital role in alleviating stress and increasing resiliency in the workplace [15][16]. Nevertheless, although employee well-being in general is the focus of HRM literature, it rarely addresses climate-related psychological issues as a remit of concern.

Green transformation, which can also be termed as organizational transition towards sustainability, presents even more complexities. Recent research has found that this transition may create uncertainty, job insecurity, and roles ambiguity, which in turn raise the stress level of employees [17][18]. However, even though these changes are necessary to achieve long-term sustainability, they may affect the organizational stability and demand a careful balance of employee expectations and mental health management.

With these developments, there still exists a research gap. The literature has the tendency of investigating climate anxiety, HRM practices and organizational transitions separately. Few combined studies have examined how HR has a role to play in effectively managing the mental health of employees in the context of climate change and sustainability transitions. This gap should be resolved in the development of holistic frameworks that should solve the purpose of integrating the aims and objectives of the environment with the well-being of employees [19].

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The proposed research design is a mixed research approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods to give a more comprehensive picture of the employee mental health on the background of climate change and organizational changeover. The quantitative part will allow measuring eco-anxiety, stress and HR intervention efficiency, whereas the qualitative part would provide more employees narration and HR outlook. This design increases the reliability and validity of the conclusions by methodological triangulation [20][21].

### 3.2 Sample

A sample population of 450 employees was chosen in the organizations that are in sustainability transitions in various industries. A purposive sampling method has been used to make sure that the respondents were directly exposed to the changes that were being made to the organization in relation to the climate. The sample will consist of employees with different levels of experience and demographics, which will enable the sample to have a comprehensive picture on how sustainability transitions have affected the mental health of the employees. The increased size of the sample

increases the reliability and validity of the study and supports a higher level of statistical analyses, including Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	52%
	Female	48%
Experience	< 5 years	40%
	5–10 years	38%
	> 10 years	22%

The table 1 reflects an equal gender balance and a greater percentage of the relatively less experienced employees, which means that less experienced employees are more at risk of facing transition-related stress and problems with adapting.

### 3.3 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews and structured interviews were used to gather primary data. The 5-point Likert scale measured perceptions of mental health-related challenges and HR practices among employees in the questionnaire. Also, HR managers were interviewed to provide an understanding of how companies approached employee well-being. To maintain consistency and completeness of data collection, three months were used.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Tools

To provide a rigorous analysis and analysis that was comprehensive enough, the study used a combination of descriptive, inferential and multivariate statistics techniques. First, to generalize the response of employees with regards to mental health issues and HR practices, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentage distribution) were computed using SPSS.

To ascertain measurement reliability, Cronbachs Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of constructs (eco-anxiety, stress and HR interventions) measurement reliability. Moreover, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to detect the underlying factor structures and then Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was carried out to confirm the measurement model. Sampling adequacy was also tested with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test and Bartlett Test of Sphericity that verified that they were suitable to be used in factor analysis.

Pearson correlation analysis was applied in order to analyze the relationships between variables. Also, multiple regression analysis was undertaken to determine the effects of the climate change risk, and organizational transition (independent variables) on employee mental health outcomes (dependent variables).

In order to determine the moderate nature of HR practices, hierarchical regression analysis was

conducted. Moreover, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied with a purpose of testing simultaneously complex relationships among variables and testing the conceptual framework. Accuracy of the models was checked through looking at model fit indices like CFI, RMSEA and Chi-square.

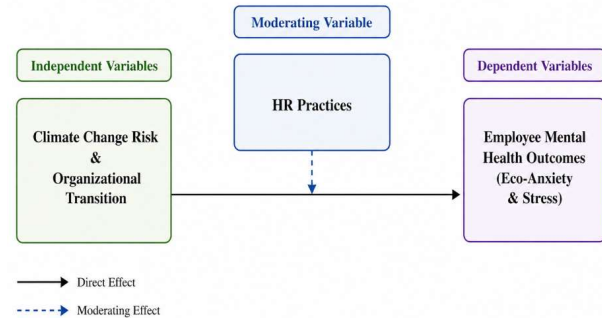


Figure 1: Research Framework

The figure 1 provides the conceptual framework of the research that reflects the relations between the key variables used to study the mental health of employees in the context of climate change and organisational transition.

Independent variables are presented at the left part of the framework, as they are a combination of climate change risk and an organizational transition into a single construct. These aspects symbolize external and internal pressures applied on the workers like issues in the environment and transformations at the workplace.

The moderating variable, HR practices, is at the center. That means that HR interventions (policies, support systems, and training) affect the magnitude and the orientation of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. The dashed arrow indicates this moderating action, that is, the HR practices can either lessen or increase the effect of stressors on employees.

The dependent variable in our context is on the right and is employee mental health outcomes and in particular, eco-anxiety and stress. The outcomes are psychological reactions of employees to the climate risks and changes in the organization.

The straight line that independent variables exert on the dependent variables is the direct effect and indicates that climate change threat and organizational change have direct impact on employee mental health. The dashed arrow of the HR practices means that positive HR policies can have a neutralizing effect on the impacts and improve the well-being of the employees.

## 4 Results & Analysis

In this section, the findings associated with employee mental health issues and the success of HR interventions concerning climate change and organizational transition are introduced. The data is analyzed using descriptive statistics, i.e. the mean scores and distributions of

percentage. The findings highlight the significant elements of stress among the workers, as well as assess the position of HR practices in reducing them. The results are an in-depth explanation of the interaction between mental health issues and organizational support system in sustainability-oriented workplaces.

**4.1 Mean Score**

Table 2: Mental Health Challenges (n = 450)

Challenge	Mean Score (1–5)	Approx. Respondents Affected
Eco-anxiety	4.4	396
Transition Stress	4.2	378
Job Insecurity	4.1	369
Uncertainty about Future	4.0	360
Workload Pressure	3.8	342

Table 2 shows the average scores of different mental health problems that employees face when undergoing sustainability transitions. The findings show that the most critical problem is eco-anxiety (Mean = 4.4) which is the most significant issue and does not affect a small proportion of the employees. This is succeeded by the transition stress (4.2) and job insecurity (4.1) indicating that organizational changes can play a significant role in causing psychological distress. The uncertainty about future (4.0) also contributes significantly, whereas the pressure because of work (3.8), but relatively lower, is also significant. Altogether, the results indicate that environmental and organizational conditions, in combination, are the main factors affecting the mental health of employees.

**4.2 HR Interventions effectiveness**

Table 3: HR Interventions Effectiveness (n = 450)

HR Practice	Effectiveness (%)	Approx. Respondents Benefited
Counseling Programs	78%	351
Flexible Work Policies	72%	324
Sustainability Training	69%	311
Employee Engagement Initiatives	65%	293

Table 3 is a demonstration of how different HR interventions can be used to solve employee mental health issues. Counseling programs (78%) are listed as the most efficient strategy, meaning the relevance of direct psychological support. The effectiveness of flexible work policies (72%) is also highly positive as they assist employees by helping them balance work and

life during transitions. Sustainability training (69%) lessens uncertainty by enhancing awareness and knowledge of the organizational changes. In the meantime, the employee engagement initiatives (65%), even though they are a little less effective, nonetheless, produce a positive effect on morale and well-being. On the whole, the findings indicate that the structured HR practices are essential to reduce stress and improve resilience of the employees.

**4.3 Measurement Model (SEM – AMOS)**

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS to validate the measurement model.

Table 4: Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Value	Recommended Value
CFI	0.95	> 0.90
RMSEA	0.045	< 0.08
Chi-square/df	2.10	< 3.00

Table 4 shows the goodness-of-fit measures that are used to test the Structural Equation Model (SEM). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.95) is greater than the recommended value (>0.90), which means that the model fits perfectly. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.045) is less than 0.08 which confirms the low approximation error. Also, the Chi-square/df (2.10) is not out of the acceptable range (<3), which implies that the model is a good fit to the data. On the whole, these findings prove the statistical validity and good fit of the proposed conceptual model.

**4.4 Structural Model & Hypothesis Testing**

Table 5: SEM Path Coefficients (AMOS Results)

Hypothesis	Path	Beta (β)	p-value	Result
H1	Climate Risk → Mental Health	0.48	<0.001	Supported
H2	Organizational Transition → Mental Health	0.42	<0.001	Supported
H3	HR Practices → Mental Health	-0.36	<0.001	Supported

Table 5 indicates the standardized path coefficients (Beta values) and level of significant in testing the hypothesis. The findings show that climate risk (β = 0.48) and organizational transition (β = 0.42) have a significant positive influence on the employee mental health challenge, i.e., they raise the level of stress and anxiety. On the other hand, the relationship between HR practices (β=-0.36) and psychological distress is negative, which shows that the HR practices can decrease the level of psychological distress. All p-values are inferior to 0.001,

which confirms the fact that the relationships are statistically significant and all the hypotheses are confirmed.

**4.5 Hierarchical Regression Analysis (Moderation Effect)**

Table 6: Moderation Analysis

Model	Variables	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	p-value
Model 1	Climate Risk	0.45	0.32	—	<0.001
Model 2	+ HR Practices	- 0.30	0.41	0.09	<0.001
Model 3	Interaction (CR $\times$ HR Practices)	- 0.22	0.47	0.06	<0.001

Table 6 presents the hierarchical regression analysis used to examine the moderating effect of HR practices. In Model 1, climate risk significantly affects mental health ( $\beta = 0.45$ ). In Model 2, adding HR practices increases explanatory power (R<sup>2</sup> from 0.32 to 0.41). In Model 3, the interaction term (Climate Risk  $\times$  HR Practices) is significant ( $\beta = -0.22$ ), confirming moderation. The increase in R<sup>2</sup> ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.06$ ) indicates that HR practices significantly weaken the negative impact of climate risk on employee mental health.

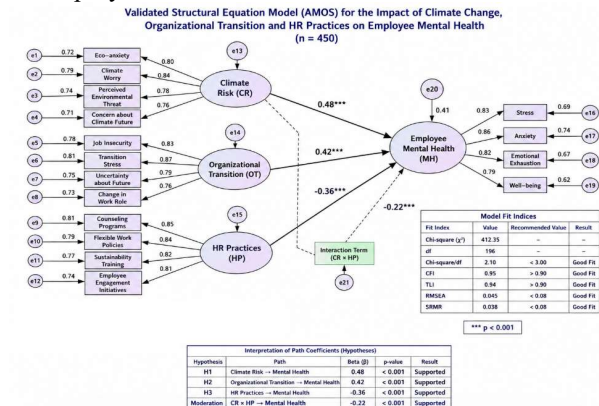


Figure.2. Validated Structural Equation Model (AMOS) As shown in figure 2 the validated Structural Equation Model (SEM) is shown in Figure, which depicts the relationships between climate risk, organizational transition, HR practices, and employee mental health. HR practices negatively affect stress and anxiety experienced by employees ( $\beta = -0.36$ ) whereas climate risk and organizational transition have positive effect on mental health challenges ( $\beta = 0.48$  and  $0.42$  respectively). The moderation effect ( $\beta = -0.22$ ) is supported, as HR practices have a negative moderating effect on the negative psychological consequences of organizational changes related to the climate. The model fit indices indicate a good fit of the model.

**4.6 Discussion**

The results reveal that employees who are going through sustainability transitions face serious mental health issues, especially eco-anxiety, transition stress, and job insecurity. The large mean scores point to the fact that environmental issues and organizational shifts are all factors that lead to the development of psychological strain. Meanwhile, the efficacy of HR interventions testifies to the paramount importance of such interventions in reducing the impact of these challenges. The most effective strategies, which focus on the significance of emotional support as well as work-life balance, are counseling programs and flexible work policies. The findings indicate that to deal with the well-being of employees, organizations should embrace systematic and proactive HR practices. In general, supportive HR interventions together with sustainability interventions can be used to enhance resilience, alleviate stress, and facilitate adaptation to changing work environments by employees.

**5 Applications**

The paper has a number of practical implications to stakeholders:

- To HR Managers: Comprehensive mental health support systems, such as counseling services and training programs should be designed and implemented.
- To Organizations: Co-locating sustainability efforts and tackling workforce well-being strategies can positively impact organizational performance and resilience in the workforce.
- To Policymakers: Crystal-clear mental health guidelines at the place of work, especially during climatic change, can aid organizations in combating the emerging psychological difficulties.
- To Researchers: The results are suggestive and invite more in-depth studies of climate psychology in the workplace environment that will enhance the creation of interdisciplinary research paradigms.

**6 Conclusions**

This paper notes that sustainability shifts and climate-related issues have a great influence on the mental health of employees, especially, eco-anxiety, stress and job insecurity. The results prove that these obstacles are common to all types of organizations and influence their overall well-being and productivity. Notably, effective HR interventions like counseling programs and flexible work policies are very important in alleviating psychological distress and aiding employees to adapt. The results emphasize the need for organizations to adopt proactive and structured HR strategies. In general, a combination of employee well-being programs and sustainability initiatives contributes to a more resilient

employee base, higher performance, and a healthier and more adaptable workforce in shifting environments.

### 7 Future Scope

This study can be developed in a number of directions in future research:

- Carry out longitudinal research to investigate how anxiety about the climate changes with time.
- Take a look at how AI-based programs could be used to monitor and control the mental health of employees.
- Carry out cross-country comparative researches to learn cultural and regulatory disparities.
- Explore how the concepts of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks can be combined with HR principles to facilitate the overall organizational growth.

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