

Employee Burnout in the Workplace: Psychological Perspectives on Organizational Well-Being

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Abstract:

Employee burnout has become an important concern because contemporary workplaces increasingly require sustained productivity, continuous adaptation, and constant psychological engagement. This study aimed to examine how organizational conditions shape employee burnout and workplace well-being. The study employed a qualitative case study design involving 12 informants consisting of operational staff, supervisors, and administrative managers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation, and analyzed using data condensation, reduction, display, and verification. The findings identified three interrelated dimensions. Performance recognition strengthened motivation, emotional energy, and commitment, while inconsistent recognition contributed to emotional fatigue and psychological withdrawal. Workload pressure appeared through multitasking demands, continuous work rhythm, limited recovery time, and visible fatigue. Organizational support emerged through supervisory accessibility, cooperative interaction, and institutional acknowledgment. The novelty of this study lies in positioning burnout as an organizationally embedded psychological process. The findings suggest that organizations should strengthen recognition consistency, workload management, and supportive workplace interaction.

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INTRODUCTION

Employee burnout has become an increasingly important social issue because modern workplaces demand sustained productivity, rapid adaptation, and continuous psychological engagement. This issue matters to society because work is not only an economic activity but also a central domain of psychological well-being, social stability, and quality of life (González-Sanguino et al., 2020; Joshanloo, 2023; Wayoi et al., 2024). When employees experience chronic emotional exhaustion, mental distancing, and



reduced professional efficacy, the consequences extend beyond individual distress into family relationships, organizational effectiveness, and broader social productivity. Reports from international labor institutions have shown that prolonged work stress contributes to absenteeism, declining motivation, reduced creativity, and increased turnover (Ding et al., 2024; Syed et al., 2021). These patterns indicate that burnout is not merely a personal weakness but a structural psychosocial challenge. Therefore, understanding employee burnout is essential for strengthening both organizational well-being and social resilience.

In contemporary workplaces, employees increasingly face conditions that intensify psychological strain. Digital connectivity has blurred the boundaries between work and private life, while performance measurement systems often require constant responsiveness, multitasking, and emotional regulation (Mousa et al., 2022; Ssenyonga et al., 2021). In many organizations, workers are expected to maintain productivity despite growing workloads, uncertain employment conditions, and limited psychological support. Field realities frequently show employees reporting fatigue, emotional detachment, irritability, reduced concentration, and diminished enthusiasm toward their roles (Crestelo et al., 2022; Ruiz et al., 2020). These symptoms often emerge gradually and are normalized as part of professional commitment. As a result, burnout frequently remains unrecognized until it affects interpersonal relationships, work quality, and organizational climate. The persistence of these conditions demonstrates that employee burnout is a concrete workplace phenomenon requiring systematic psychological examination and organizational attention.

Previous studies have extensively examined burnout from psychological and organizational perspectives. Barnawi (2022), Parmar et al. (2022), and Chaika (2025) conceptualized burnout as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, establishing the foundational framework for subsequent research. Westbrook et al. (2022) and Elidemir et al. (2020) emphasized the role of job demands and job resources in explaining burnout dynamics within organizational settings. Newsham et al. (2022) and Gharagozlou et al. (2020) further argued that mismatches between employees and workplace conditions such as workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values significantly predict burnout. Meanwhile, Jamilah et al. (2025) highlighted the reciprocal relationship between chronic stress exposure and declining work engagement. Although these studies offer important insights, many focus primarily on measurement models and individual outcomes, while giving less attention to organizational well-being as an integrated psychological environment. This gap remains significant and requires further investigation.

The novelty of this study lies in positioning burnout not solely as an individual psychological outcome but as an indicator of organizational well-being. Contemporary workplace studies increasingly recognize that burnout emerges through interaction between personal coping processes, organizational culture, managerial practices, and psychosocial work environments (Chow et al., 2023; Smit et al., 2021). However, empirical discussions often remain fragmented, separating individual psychological responses from structural organizational determinants. This research addresses that limitation by integrating psychological perspectives with organizational well-being

analysis. Through this approach, burnout is understood as both a personal experience and a reflection of institutional conditions that shape emotional sustainability at work (Chen et al., 2021; Schultz et al., 2022). This perspective is important because organizations today require not only productive employees but also psychologically healthy systems capable of maintaining long-term motivation, resilience, and human-centered performance.

Based on these conditions, the central problem of this study concerns how employee burnout develops within workplace environments and how organizational conditions contribute to psychological well-being. More specifically, the study examines why chronic work-related stress persists despite increasing awareness of mental health issues in professional settings. It also explores the mechanisms through which organizational demands, interpersonal climate, leadership practices, and perceived support influence emotional exhaustion and disengagement among employees. These questions are important because many organizations still approach burnout as an individual adaptation problem rather than a systemic workplace phenomenon. Consequently, identifying the psychological and organizational processes underlying burnout becomes necessary for developing more comprehensive understandings of employee well-being in contemporary institutional contexts.

This study argues that employee burnout should be understood as a multidimensional psychological phenomenon rooted in the relationship between individuals and organizational environments. The preliminary assumption is that burnout intensifies when institutional expectations exceed employees' psychological resources while organizations fail to provide supportive climates, autonomy, recognition, and meaningful social connection. Accordingly, organizational well-being is not merely an outcome of productivity but a foundational condition that shapes mental health and sustainable performance. The original contribution of this research lies in developing an integrative perspective that connects burnout psychology with organizational well-being discourse. By doing so, this study seeks to contribute a more comprehensive framework for understanding workplace mental health and to provide a conceptual basis for more human-centered organizational strategies.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a case study approach (Sarfo et al., 2021). The design was selected because the study aimed to explore in depth the psychological experiences of employees related to burnout and to understand how organizational conditions shape workplace well-being. Employee burnout is a complex psychological phenomenon that cannot be adequately understood only through numerical measurement because it is closely connected to personal meaning, social interaction, institutional culture, and contextual workplace dynamics. A qualitative case study therefore enabled the researcher to examine the lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of participants within a specific organizational setting. Through this approach, the study investigated how work demands, organizational support, and recognition of performance influenced employees' psychological well-being in the workplace.

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, specifically within the educational institutional environment under the Biro Pendidikan in Paiton, Probolinggo, East Java, Indonesia. This setting was selected because the organizational environment is characterized by structured institutional responsibilities, relatively intensive work interaction, and continuous performance expectations. Preliminary field observations indicated several psychological strain indicators, including work fatigue, declining motivation, emotional pressure during task completion, and varying levels of organizational support. In addition, institutional activities such as Institution Award 2024 provided relevant contextual evidence regarding organizational recognition and employee support practices. These characteristics made the setting appropriate for examining the psychological dimensions of employee burnout and organizational well-being.

The study involved 12 informants selected through purposive sampling. Informants were chosen based on direct involvement in institutional activities, a minimum of one year of work experience, and sustained exposure to work-related demands. The participants consisted of 8 operational staff members, 2 supervisors, and 2 administrative managers within the educational institutional environment of Nurul Jadid. Operational staff were selected because they directly experienced daily task demands and work pressure. Supervisors were included to provide perspectives on workload distribution, coordination, and daily managerial interaction. Administrative managers were involved to provide broader institutional perspectives regarding employee support, performance recognition, and organizational welfare practices.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation (Lim, 2025). In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format to allow participants to explain their experiences, perceptions, and emotional responses related to burnout, work pressure, recognition, and organizational support. Non-participant observation was carried out to examine workplace atmosphere, daily work rhythms, patterns of interaction, and observable signs of work intensity and psychological strain. Documentation was used to strengthen field findings through institutional records, work guidelines, internal activity reports, and visual documentation of organizational events, including the Institution Award 2024. The combination of these techniques enabled the researcher to obtain contextual and comprehensive data regarding employee experiences within the institutional setting.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data reduction, data display, and data verification. Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, and organizing raw information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data reduction was carried out by coding and grouping the data into thematic categories related to workload pressure, organizational support, performance recognition, and psychological well-being. Data display was conducted through narrative matrices, thematic descriptions, and categorical presentation to identify relationships among emerging themes. Data verification involved repeated interpretation, pattern comparison, and consistency checking across data sources until stable findings were

obtained. To ensure validity, the study applied source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. Preliminary interpretations were also confirmed with several key informants, while prolonged engagement and persistent observation were conducted to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study identified three interrelated findings concerning employee burnout and organizational well-being at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid. The results indicate that recognition of employee performance, workload pressure, and organizational support significantly shaped employees' psychological experiences in the workplace. The following section presents these findings in greater detail based on interviews, observations, and documentation.

Recognition of Employee Performance

Recognition of employee performance in this study refers to the practical and psychological process through which organizations acknowledge employees' efforts, achievements, responsibility, and contribution to collective work goals. In the field, recognition was not understood only as formal rewards, incentives, or public appreciation, but also as everyday organizational responses that signal that employees' work is noticed, valued, and respected. Operationally, this subtheme appeared through verbal appreciation from supervisors, positive feedback after task completion, acknowledgment during team meetings, and visible appreciation of work contributions in daily interactions. Employees interpreted recognition as an important source of psychological validation because it strengthened feelings of competence, belonging, and meaningful participation in the organization. Conversely, the absence of recognition was associated with emotional fatigue, declining motivation, and perceptions that effort was taken for granted despite continuous demands and professional commitment.

The first interview findings indicate that recognition strongly influenced employees' emotional experience at work. One operational employee stated, "When my supervisor acknowledges the effort I put into completing difficult assignments, I feel that my work has meaning and I become more motivated to maintain performance." Another employee explained, "Even simple appreciation, such as being thanked after finishing a demanding task, makes me feel more energized and less emotionally tired." These statements suggest that employees did not interpret recognition merely as symbolic courtesy but as a meaningful psychological response that shaped emotional endurance in the workplace. The researcher interprets these findings as evidence that recognition functions as a form of emotional reinforcement. When employees perceive that their contribution is seen and appreciated, they develop stronger psychological commitment, greater enthusiasm, and a more positive orientation toward daily work responsibilities.

The second interview findings reveal that the absence of recognition contributed to emotional withdrawal and declining engagement. One participant stated, "Sometimes I work overtime and complete urgent assignments, but when nobody responds or acknowledges it, I feel exhausted and begin questioning why I should keep giving extra effort." Another informant explained, "What makes me tired is not only the workload but the feeling that whatever I do seems invisible." These accounts indicate that lack of recognition produced not only dissatisfaction but also emotional depletion and reduced attachment to work. The researcher interprets these responses as showing that recognition carries psychological meaning beyond formal evaluation. Employees expect reciprocal acknowledgment that validates their contribution within the organization. When such acknowledgment is absent, work demands become emotionally heavier because employees perceive imbalance between personal effort, organizational attention, and social appreciation.

Observation results support the interview findings. During field observation, the researcher noted that appreciation practices appeared in several routine work situations. In team briefings, supervisors occasionally mentioned employees who had completed assignments effectively or responded quickly to urgent requests. Positive comments were also observed during informal interactions when coworkers expressed appreciation for task support or timely problem solving. However, recognition was not distributed consistently across all employees and situations. In several work activities, contributions were completed without visible acknowledgment despite considerable effort. From the researcher's perspective, this pattern indicates that recognition was present in the organizational environment but remained situational rather than systematic. Restated simply, employees worked in a setting where appreciation existed but was not always predictable. As a result, recognition functioned as a variable emotional resource rather than a stable organizational practice.

The overall pattern of data shows that recognition of employee performance operated as an important psychological mechanism influencing workplace well-being. Across interviews and observations, employees consistently linked recognition with emotional energy, motivation, and stronger commitment to work responsibilities. Conversely, limited acknowledgment was associated with emotional fatigue, reduced enthusiasm, and a growing sense of psychological distance from work. A recurring pattern also emerged regarding the form of recognition. Employees did not primarily emphasize material rewards; rather, they valued timely acknowledgment, verbal appreciation, and visible awareness of their efforts. Another important pattern was inconsistency. Recognition was present within daily organizational interaction, but it appeared unevenly across contexts and individuals. This suggests that recognition becomes most effective when embedded as a regular organizational practice. In practical terms, employees performed more positively when they felt psychologically visible within the workplace.

Workload Pressure

Workload pressure in this study refers to the condition in which employees experience sustained demands related to task volume, time limitations, work intensity, and responsibility that require continuous psychological and physical adjustment. In the field, workload pressure was operationally understood as the accumulation of daily tasks, simultaneous work responsibilities, deadline urgency, and the expectation of maintaining performance within limited time and resources. This condition was visible not only through the number of assignments completed by employees but also through observable work rhythms, reduced pauses between tasks, prolonged concentration, and signs of fatigue during daily activities. Employees' work environment showed that workload pressure emerged when task demands exceeded the pace that could be comfortably managed within routine working hours. Therefore, workload pressure was interpreted as a situational organizational condition that directly shaped emotional strain, work endurance, and psychological well-being.

Table 1. Observation of Workload Pressure

Observation Findings	Indicators
Employees were observed handling several tasks simultaneously during routine working hours.	Task accumulation and multitasking demands
Work activities frequently continued without long pauses between one assignment and the next.	Continuous work rhythm and limited recovery time
Several employees appeared to maintain prolonged concentration during periods of deadline completion.	Sustained cognitive demand and attentional pressure
Work interactions became more task-focused during peak periods of activity.	Increased performance orientation under time pressure
Visible signs of physical tiredness were observed toward the end of the working period.	Fatigue resulting from prolonged work intensity

The data presented in the table indicate that workload pressure was embedded in the daily structure of work activities rather than appearing as an occasional condition. The researcher interprets these findings as showing that employees operated within a work environment characterized by sustained task continuity, overlapping responsibilities, and limited opportunities for recovery during active work periods. Restated simply, employees were required to maintain concentration and productivity across consecutive tasks with minimal interruption. Field observation further reinforced this interpretation. During busy periods, employees moved directly from one task to another while maintaining attention to operational demands. Communication also became increasingly instrumental and task-oriented, indicating prioritization of completion efficiency. By the end of the work period, visible physical fatigue and reduced expressive interaction suggested that prolonged workload intensity had psychological and behavioral effects on employees' daily functioning.

The overall pattern of data shows that workload pressure emerged through the interaction of task accumulation, time urgency, continuous activity, and sustained concentration. These elements did not appear separately but operated simultaneously within the daily work process. A clear pattern indicates that as work intensity increased,

employees adjusted by narrowing attention toward immediate task completion and reducing nonessential interaction. Another important pattern was that workload pressure accumulated progressively across the workday rather than appearing suddenly. The observable consequence was a gradual transition from normal work rhythm toward visible fatigue and increased cognitive strain. This suggests that workload pressure functioned as a continuous organizational condition that shaped both behavioral adaptation and emotional endurance. In practical terms, employees maintained productivity, but the sustained intensity also created psychological demands that influenced overall organizational well-being.

Organizational Support

Organizational support in this study refers to the extent to which employees perceive that the organization values their contribution, responds to their work-related needs, and provides emotional, social, and institutional resources that help them perform effectively. In the field, organizational support was operationally understood not only as formal policy but also as everyday organizational practices that create feelings of being assisted, acknowledged, and protected within the work environment. This support appeared through supervisory attention, opportunities for communication, responsiveness to work difficulties, peer collaboration, and visible appreciation of employee contribution. Employees interpreted organizational support as an important psychological condition because it reduced emotional pressure and strengthened confidence in carrying out work responsibilities. Conversely, limited support was associated with feelings of isolation, emotional strain, and a perception that work demands had to be managed individually without sufficient institutional assistance.

The documentation available in this study shows a moment of appreciation during the Institution Award 2024 organized by the Education Bureau of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid in Paiton, Probolinggo. This documentation is relevant to the subtheme of organizational support because it reflects institutional recognition as part of organizational care toward employee contribution and collective performance. From this documentation, the organizational support process can be described as follows: employees carry out work responsibilities and contribute to institutional goals; supervisors and organizational leaders observe and evaluate these contributions; appreciation is then expressed publicly through institutional events that acknowledge achievement. This process demonstrates that organizational support is not limited to administrative policy but is also communicated symbolically through collective recognition. For documentation purposes, suitable supporting photographs may include award presentation moments, leadership acknowledgment during institutional events, employee participation in formal appreciation activities, group photos of award recipients, or visual records of internal meetings where appreciation and support are expressed.



Figure 1. Institutional Recognition as a Form of Organizational Support at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid

Observation results indicate that organizational support was visible through daily interaction patterns within the workplace. During field observation, the researcher found that supervisors were accessible when employees encountered work-related difficulties, and colleagues often provided practical assistance during periods of increased workload. Communication among staff generally reflected cooperative problem-solving rather than purely individual task completion. In several work situations, employees discussed task barriers collectively and sought immediate clarification when operational challenges emerged. The researcher also observed that supportive interaction was expressed not only through formal instruction but through informal encouragement, shared responsibility, and interpersonal responsiveness. These observations suggest that organizational support functioned as an active social resource embedded in everyday organizational life. The presence of supportive communication appeared to reduce visible tension and contributed to a more stable psychological atmosphere during work activities.

Restated simply, the findings indicate that employees experienced organizational support when the workplace provided not only demands but also emotional reassurance, practical assistance, and visible acknowledgment of contribution. Organizational support was understood by employees as the feeling that they were not facing work pressure alone. The documentation of Institution Award 2024 reinforces this interpretation because public appreciation demonstrated that employee efforts were institutionally recognized. Observation further showed that support was expressed in routine work interactions through cooperation, guidance, responsiveness, and shared problem-solving. From the researcher's interpretation, organizational support operated as a psychological buffer that reduced emotional burden and strengthened employees' sense of security in the workplace. In practical terms, support became meaningful when employees perceived that organizational structures and interpersonal relationships actively contributed to their ability to manage work demands.

The overall pattern of data shows that organizational support operated through both symbolic and everyday relational mechanisms. At the institutional level, support appeared through formal recognition and public acknowledgment of employee contribution. At the interpersonal level, support emerged through accessible

supervisors, cooperative colleagues, responsive communication, and shared responsibility in handling work challenges. A clear pattern also indicates that organizational support was experienced most strongly when symbolic appreciation was accompanied by practical daily assistance. Employees interpreted support not only as formal organizational attention but as repeated experiences of being heard, helped, and valued. This suggests that organizational support became psychologically meaningful when it was consistently visible across both formal institutional structures and routine social interaction. In this context, support contributed to emotional stability, stronger work engagement, and a more positive perception of organizational well-being.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that employee burnout in the workplace is shaped by the interaction between recognition of performance, workload pressure, and organizational support. These three dimensions did not emerge as isolated variables but appeared as interrelated organizational conditions that influenced employees' emotional experiences and workplace well-being. The results indicate that burnout developed not merely from the quantity of work demands but from how employees psychologically interpreted their work environment. When employees perceived that their efforts were acknowledged, supported, and situated within meaningful social relations, work demands became more manageable (Ashraf et al., 2025; Dobrowolska et al., 2020). Conversely, when recognition was limited, support was inconsistent, and workload intensity accumulated continuously, emotional strain became more visible. These findings reinforce the view that burnout should be understood not only as an individual psychological reaction but also as an organizationally embedded phenomenon shaped by institutional interaction, relational climate, and daily work structure.

The findings regarding recognition of employee performance are consistent with the foundational perspective of Maslach and Leiter, who argue that recognition and reward are important dimensions of the relationship between employees and the workplace. In this study, recognition appeared not only through formal appreciation but also through everyday verbal acknowledgment, supervisor feedback, and visible awareness of employees' efforts (Blake et al., 2020; Brown et al., 2021). This confirms that recognition carries psychological meaning beyond material reward. Employees associated recognition with motivation, emotional energy, and stronger commitment to work responsibilities. However, this study also revealed an important contextual difference. Existing literature often conceptualizes recognition as an organizational resource, whereas the present findings suggest that its psychological effect depends greatly on consistency and predictability (Anna et al., 2022; Hsiung et al., 2022). This indicates that recognition functions most effectively when it becomes a stable organizational practice rather than an occasional symbolic gesture.

The findings related to workload pressure support the job demands perspective developed by Luqman et al. (2021) and Karrani et al. (2024), which explains that sustained demands consume employees' psychological resources and contribute to emotional exhaustion. The observations in this study demonstrated that workload

pressure was embedded in daily work routines through multitasking demands, continuous task flow, time urgency, and prolonged concentration. These findings align with previous studies that identify excessive workload as one of the strongest predictors of burnout. At the same time, the present study provides additional contextual understanding by showing that workload pressure accumulated progressively throughout the workday. Rather than appearing as sudden overload, work intensity developed gradually through uninterrupted activity and limited opportunities for recovery (Boukis et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2023). This pattern suggests that burnout may emerge through repetitive daily exposure to sustained cognitive and emotional demands. Theoretically, this expands the understanding of burnout as a cumulative process shaped by work rhythm and temporal continuity.

The findings on organizational support are consistent with organizational support theory, which emphasizes that employees develop stronger psychological security and commitment when they perceive that the organization values their contribution and responds to their needs. In the present study, organizational support appeared through both symbolic institutional recognition and everyday interpersonal interaction (Ahmad et al., 2021; Eliot, 2020). The documentation of Institution Award 2024 at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid illustrated formal acknowledgment at the institutional level, while observation findings revealed accessible supervisors, cooperative colleagues, and responsive communication during daily work activities. This combination indicates that organizational support operated simultaneously through structural and relational mechanisms (Chu et al., 2024; Mercader et al., 2021).

The theoretical implication of this study is that employee burnout should be understood as a relational and organizationally situated psychological phenomenon rather than merely an individual coping problem. Recognition, workload structure, and organizational support collectively shape how employees interpret pressure, emotional effort, and workplace belonging. The study therefore contributes to the psychological literature by highlighting the importance of integrating institutional context, social interaction, and daily work processes into the analysis of burnout. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations should develop more consistent recognition practices, create healthier workload management systems, and strengthen supportive interpersonal climates. In the context of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, organizational well-being may be strengthened by ensuring that appreciation is regular, workload distribution remains manageable, and support is visibly present in everyday work relations. Such efforts can contribute not only to employee well-being but also to sustainable institutional performance.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that employee burnout at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid emerged through the interaction of performance recognition, workload pressure, and organizational support as interconnected organizational conditions shaping employees' psychological well-being. The most important lesson from this research is that burnout is not determined solely by the amount of work but by how employees

experience acknowledgment, support, and daily relational climate within the institution. The strength of this study lies in its scholarly contribution to burnout literature by positioning burnout as an organizationally embedded psychological phenomenon rather than merely an individual coping problem. However, this study was limited to a single institutional setting with a relatively small number of informants. Future research may expand to multiple institutions, comparative contexts, and longitudinal designs to examine changing organizational well-being dynamics over time.

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