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ACTIONABLE DESIGN FOR HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

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Abstract

Restricted Employee Sustainability Theory (REST) conceptualizes sustainable thriving as the dynamic balance of maintenance, growth, and generativity. While REST establishes why such balance is structurally necessary, it does not specify how organizations can create the conditions that make this balance viable in everyday work. This paper addresses that gap by integrating REST with multilevel thriving at work research. Drawing on ten literature reviews published between 2020 and 2026, I make an overview of reviews established enablers of thriving and reinterpret them through the lens of REST's three core functions. On these foundations, I propose an actionable design framework that distinguishes between function-specific enablers (supporting maintenance, growth, or generativity directly) and system-level HRM configurations that regulate the distribution of resources across functions. In doing so, I emphasize thriving as institutionally enabled rather than solely individually enacted. The paper contributes to theory by (1) specifying how organizations can support and sustain thriving at work, (2) identifying qualitatively different imbalance patterns beyond simple performance distinctions, and (3) complimenting REST by introducing actionable design model for human sustainability in the workplace. Practical implications for different levels of organization are discussed.

Keywords: *Human Sustainability, REST, Thriving at Work, Work Design*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Sustainable work has become a central concern in management scholarship, particularly in light of growing demands that strain employees' physical, psychological, and social resources. The recently proposed Restricted Employee Sustainability Theory (REST) (Barnes et al., 2023) offers an important structural framework for understanding human sustainability. REST conceptualizes sustainability as the dynamic balancing of three core functions (maintenance, growth, and generativity), arguing that individuals thrive when these functions reinforce rather than deplete one another. In doing so, the framework integrates insights from health and well-being research and positions thriving as a state of bounded homeostasis rather than constant optimization (Barnes & Wagner, 2023; Barnes et al., 2023). Yet, while REST articulates why balance is necessary, it leaves underdeveloped the question of how organizations can design conditions that make such balance viable in everyday work contexts.

However, identifying the need to balance maintenance, growth, and generativity is not the same as specifying the institutional architecture that enables this balance. REST is deliberately focusing on structural dynamics of sustainability across life domains. It does not detail the concrete organizational behaviors, HR systems, or multilevel contextual mechanisms that allow employees to move from surviving to thriving at work. At the same time, the literature on thriving at work, originating with Spre-

itzer et al. (2005), has generated substantial knowledge about the antecedents and outcomes of thriving. These reviews (Goh et al., 2022; Istiningtyas et al., 2025; Jiang et al., 2026; Liang et al., 2024; Manfreda et al., 2025; Merkuž et al., 2024; Moloney et al., 2020; Rehmat et al., 2021; Shahid et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2025) consistently show that thriving is socially embedded and institutionally shaped rather than merely individually enacted. Yet this body of work has rarely been explicitly integrated with REST's sustainability logic. As a result, we lack a theory-driven explanation of how thriving can be sustained through organizational design. Addressing this gap is important because if we do not clearly define the conditions that enable balance, the idea of balancing REST core functions remains appealing in principle but unclear in practice.

The purpose of this paper is to specify the actionable design through which sustainable thriving can be realized in the workplace by integrating REST with thriving at work research. Due to the nature of the concept of thriving *at work*, I focus on enablers within the workplace. While REST articulates that maintenance, growth and generativity must be dynamically balanced for sustainable work, it does not specify the enabling conditions that make such balance possible. In the past 6 years there were many literature reviews published on thriving at work, which helps us to search for and identify different findings of individual reviews, providing overall picture for informing practice and research on the topic (Faulkner et al., 2022). Using the method overview of reviews (Kho et al., 2020), I reviewed 10 suitable literature reviews on thriving at work, which helped me to identify key enablers and outcomes of thriving from different points of view. By using existing evidence on thriving at work, I advance and complement existing conversations, contributing to broader research agenda, that conceptualizes thriving as a central mechanism of human sustainability.

My contributions are threefold. First, I advance the literature on thriving at work, by integrating the socially embedded model of thriving theory and REST theory, conceptualizing thriving as institutionally enabled, not solely individually enacted. In doing so, I extend the argument of Barnes et al. (2023) by demonstrating that sustaining thriving over time requires not only individual agency but also supportive environmental conditions, highlighting the importance of context in maintaining balance and human sustainability. Second, I complement REST theory by recognizing qualitatively different imbalance patterns, not just "high vs. low performance." While these imbalance patterns arise from research on thriving, identifying specific situations and indicators has an important practical value too. Therefore, the contribution of this paper is not solely theoretical, but is practical as well. I provide explicit examples that can occur in organization and how organizations recognize if their employees are only surviving, rather than thriving. Third, I advance REST theory by repositioning thriving as structurally embedded rather than individually generated, transforming it from meta-level sustainability framework into actionable design model for human sustainability in the workplace. In doing so, it shows how organizations can intentionally design conditions that move employees beyond survival toward sustained, balanced thriving, informed by rich previous research on thriving at work.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Restricted Employee Sustainability Theory

Barnes et al. (2023) presents framework, that enables humans to sustain their physical, psychological and social health. The REST framework is meta-synthesis of research on health and well-being, and is human-centered model. They define three core functions: maintenance, growth and generativity. Individuals allocate their limited resources across these functions, while they face ongoing acute or chronic demands from the environment (or entropic forces). They further suggest that individuals are thriving when maintenance, growth and generativity are in balance, where health remains relatively stable (even though there is a tolerable imbalance). Maintenance includes activities that preserve current health at multiple levels: individual sleep, mindfulness, coping strategies, coworker/supervisor support, and how the organization supports employees (climate, flexibility). Through growth, employees expand the self through learning, resilience, skill development and meaningful work. Individuals also have to invest beyond the self in order to be sustainable (generativity). This in-

cludes mentoring, caregiving, compassion, leadership and supporting family – having a purpose. However, authors highlight that generativity can be a resource drain as well as resource multiplier.

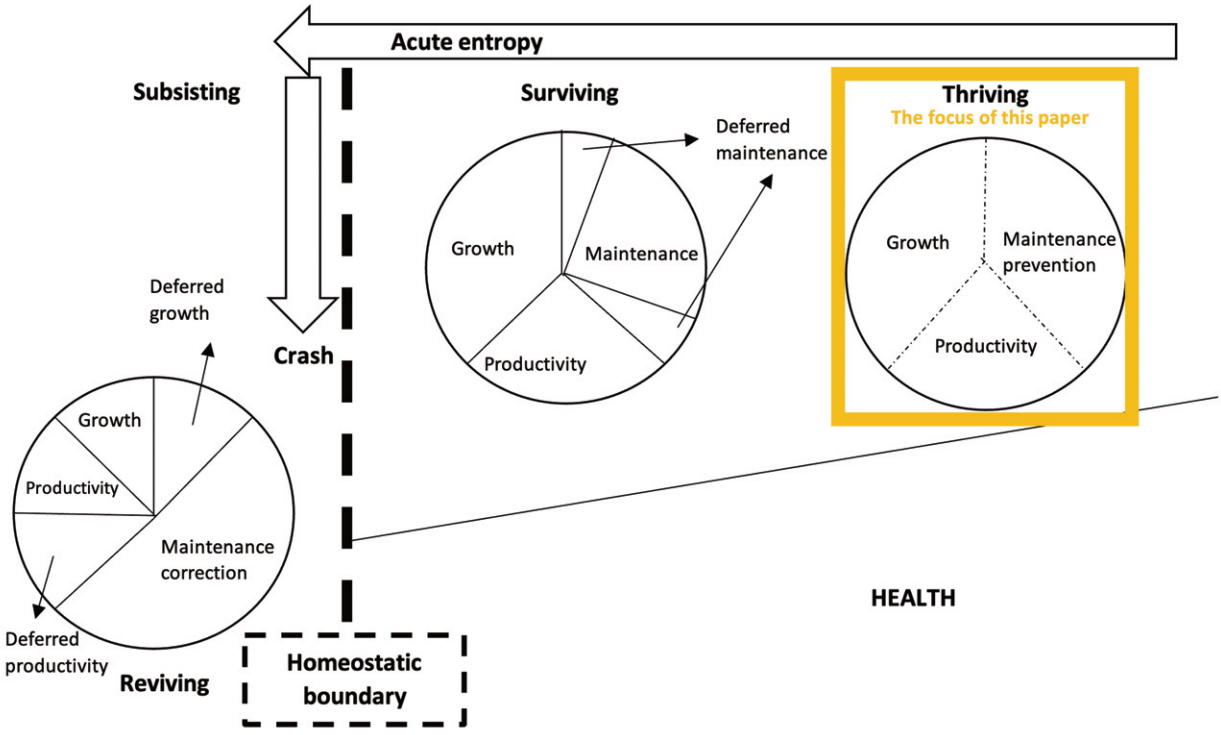
When having all things in balance, one is in bounded homeostasis: one can tolerate imbalance between the functions, but beyond, health declines rapidly and non-linearly. Furthermore, if individuals defer maintenance to pursue growth or generativity, they create risk for their health. When demands overcome maintenance employees go into surviving state. If corrective maintenance is not successful, individuals experience health crash and fall into subsisting state. While some crashes are reversible, they impose heavy personal and organizational costs and require extensive recovery resources. Thus, prevention (ongoing health preservation) is far more efficient and sustainable on the long run.

To summarize, REST proposes that sustainability depends on dynamic, long-term balancing of maintenance, growth and generativity, but having in mind that we do not have a perfect balance at every moment. While deferred maintenance is tempting for increasing growth and generativity, it can be dangerous. Synergies should be sought, so functions can strengthen others, which enables employees to thrive (Barnes et al., 2023). This particular state is of my interest in this paper. Based on the research of thriving at work, I want to identify key concepts that support thriving through the lens of REST. This is important, because the REST model itself emphasizes the importance of sustaining thriving in order to have a healthy, sustainable, resilient life. Let us see what can we do to support human sustainability in the workplace.

2.2 Thriving at work

As mentioned, Barnes et al. (2023) built the REST theory from health and well-being research, one of which is thriving at work, as defined by Spreitzer et al. (2005). As per Spreitzer et al. (2005), thriving is defined as a psychological state of an individual, where individual experiences joint states

Figure 1: REST model and marked focus of this paper



Adapted from Barnes et al. (2023)

of learning and vitality. Authors emphasize, that in order to thrive, you should experience both. This is in line with REST – when in balance with the three functions, you can experience thriving. For example, when we had a good night sleep, have great relationships with our coworkers and are in supportive work environment, we feel vital, energetic, ready to do the work. We are also more prone to learn new things at work expanding our growth and engage in more generativity, building our resource base. Thus, in line with REST, thriving is a desired state, which can be maintained with various approaches.

Generally, thriving at work is grounded as socially embedded model, meaning that connection with other people is one of important aspects that support one's learning and vitality, jointly experienced as thriving, but most importantly, individual needs to be in a state, where he/she can sustain this state. Spreitzer et al. (2005) explain thriving is supported directly by agentic work behaviors, and indirectly by unit contextual features and resources produced in the doing of work (I talk more about this in section of Actionable design 1). Individuals can experience different positive states, but authors provide clear differences between thriving and other related construct. For example, flourishing is usually a positive state in which individual functions well, but it is much broader state, because we can flourish if we do not learn. But for thriving, we need to experience both. Similar is with flow – individual senses positive energy, but do not necessarily have a sense of learning (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Thus, in this article, I focus solely on thriving at work and how its research can support further understanding of REST theory.

With rich research on thriving at work, number of reviews emerged in last five years, emphasizing the importance of the construct (for example Goh et al., 2022; Jiang et al., 2026; Liang et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2021). This means that the body of research is well reviewed and these reviews should be utilized to understand how we can enable thriving at work, specifically within the theoretical propositions of REST (Barnes et al., 2023). Thus, I will not repeat what are the findings of each literature review on thriving, but I will make a bird's eye overview and pinpoint specifics that can help maintaining thriving for sustainable living. In the next section I present the method overview of reviews and its results.

3 METHODS

In the literature, there are different names for a review of literature reviews of a topic – systematic overview of reviews, umbrella reviews, review of reviews or meta-reviews. But the purpose of all is same: using explicit and systematic methods to find systematic reviews and meta analyses for comparison of individual systematic reviews for providing summarized view of findings for a particular research question (Faulkner et al., 2022). These kinds of reviews are usually used for policy making and practice, because it summarizes large scale of evidence, identifying strengths and limitations of existing knowledge about the topic (Liberati et al., 2009). Thus, this method is widely used in healthcare, but is rarely seen in management research. Faulkner et al. (2022) note that umbrella reviews show relative maturity of a field, indicating if there is sufficient number of studies done, that warrants for systematic review. Thriving research specifically, had an exponential growth of research in past years (Merkuž et al., 2024), which encouraged different authors to make literature reviews. While each provides different but similar perspective on thriving, a review of these reviews is needed for rigorous synthesis of existing evidence. I follow Kho et al.'s (2020) outcome-centric approach for conducting overview of reviews, because I am providing an extension of the REST framework, specifically elaborating on how thriving can be enabled and what are the outcomes of thriving employees based on findings from different literature reviews. Thus, the purpose here is to synthetize existing literature reviews on thriving in order to provide guidelines how to sustain thriving within REST framework. My research question is:

What mechanisms (enablers) and outcomes of thriving are consistently identified across literature reviews, and how can these inform guidelines within the REST framework?

4 RESULTS

4.1 Population

To identify relevant literature reviews, I performed search through Google Scholar. The keywords used were "thriving at work review", where I wanted to find literature reviews related to thriving at work, as de-

fined by Spreitzer et al. (2005). I focused on last 6 years (published from 2020 on), as literature on thriving took off from 2017 on (Goh et al., 2022; Merkuž et al., 2024). I found 12 papers related to thriving and literature review of the field. In terms of criteria, I have excluded two papers published from 2020 on. First is meta-analysis by Liu et al. (2021). Meta-analyses are excluded because of their emphasis on quantitative effect size estimation, whereas I focus on conceptualization of thriving, for which systematic reviews are more suitable. Secondly, I found 11 review papers on thriving at work, however I excluded one review, as authors included studies from 2001 on, while thriving was firstly introduced in 2005, therefore this review did not meet the criteria for inclusion.

4.2 Analysis

Due to the small sample size, I analyzed each review's content in detail, which I summarize in Table 1. For each paper I reviewed which methods they have used for their review, number of papers analyzed, coverage in term of years (how many years of research they reviewed), what their focus was (either for research or practice), their core contribution as presented by authors of the review, and if there was a specific domain or scope. Detailed analysis is presented below.

Most reviews used systematic literature review (3), while 2 used bibliometric methods, and integrative review approach. Other's performed conceptual review (1), narrative review (1) and a perspective/synthesis paper (1). Interestingly, these different reviews provide different reviews give researchers the opportunity to view the field from different perspectives. For example, systematic reviews provide structured analysis of known evidence, including criteria for inclusion and focused objective (Stratton, 2019). On the other hand, narrative review is an unstructured review of literature, and it is used to put in context or for justifying research focus, not particularly specifying the methods for selecting and reviewing the literature chosen. There are some subforms of narrative reviews: critical, conceptual and state-of-the art review. In thriving research, a conceptual review was also done, where it is common to evaluate a general consensus of the literature on a specific research topic and they suggest how to better understand the topic, showing gaps of knowledge (Stratton, 2019). Two reviews used bibliometric methods, which are known to be a quantitative approach for evaluation and monitoring of published research, providing the option to systematically and transparently prepare a review process that is reproducible (Zupic & Čater, 2015). Lastly, in one case authors define their review as a perspective paper, focusing on a specific perspective of research in terms of thriving. In their case they focus on the perspective of HRM in thriving research (Jiang et al., 2026), where they review the knowledge on thriving and adapt it to the HRM scholarship. Five out of then reviews report that they use PRISMA guidelines, which are recommendations to ensure transparency and complete reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Page et al., 2021).

On average, there were 90 documents used for review. Liang et al. (2024) had highest number of research included (281 documents), as their span of research is also the largest (from 2005 to 2024). Istiningtyas et al. (2025) included only 14 documents, as they also reported the shortest period for their review (from 2019-2024). Most reviews focused on thriving at work as a concept across organizational behavior and management literature, while three focused on a specific research within thriving: Moloney et al. (2020) reviewed thriving through lens of nurses in healthcare; Manfreda et al. (2025) reviewed thriving in tourism and hospitality; and Jiang et al. (2026) focused on thriving through HRM lens. Below I present the summary of findings from reviews, which can be found in Appendix 1. In appendix I have included all reviews, but it is important to note that Merkuž et al. (2024) and Jiang et al. (2026) focus on general topics and do not provide specific enablers and outcomes, as presented within other reviews in the table. However, I still included the ideas and argumentations of these reviews, which are important to be included, even if I did not write specific enablers and outcomes for them.

4.3 Summary of findings in reviews on thriving

As mentioned before, authors did different reviews, however the results were consistent throughout. My overview of reviews indicates (see Appendix 1 and Figure 2 for summary) that thriving is consistently recognized as a psychological state, and is so-

Table 1: Overview of literature reviews on thriving at work (by published date)

Authors	Journal	Review Type/ Methods used	Number of papers analysed	Coverage (up to…)	Focus and core contributions	Domain / Scope
Moloney et al. (2020)	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	Integrative review (PRISMA)	20	2005–2019	Organizational factors supporting hospital nurses' wellbeing and thriving; alignment with Spreitzer et al.'s (2005) thriving; **focus:** research and practice; **contribution:** how to support nurse thriving	Hospital nursing / healthcare organizations
Shahid et al. (2021)	International Journal of Organizational Analysis	Conceptual review; conceptual framework development	23	2005–2020	Antecedents and outcomes of thriving; proposed pathways and research agenda; **focus:** research; **contribution:** synthesis of research and proposed hypotheses for future research	Thriving at work across organizational behavior / management literature
Rehmat et al. (2021)	Academic Journal of Social Sciences	Narrative review / conceptual synthesis	Above 150 papers (not specified)	2005–2021	Consolidating tested antecedents and outcomes of thriving; **focus:** research, but mainly for practice; **contribution:** organizing nomological network to better understand thriving antecedents and outcomes in more practical way	Thriving at work across organizational behavior / management literature
Goh et al. (2022)	*Journal of Organizational Behavior*	*Integrative review; conceptual synthesis across multilevel evidence*	*136*	*Not explicitly specified*	*Progress and gaps in thriving at work research across levels (individual, relational, contextual) and mechanisms; **focus:** research; **contribution:** Multilevel integrative framework summarizing evidence and setting research agenda for thriving at work*	*Thriving at work across organizational behavior / management literature*
Liang et al. (2024)	Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	Bibliometric methods through PRISMA protocol (co-citation, citation, hotspot identification)	281	2005–2024	Knowledge structure, hotspots, and trends in thriving at work research; **focus:** research; **contribution:** general propositions for future research in terms of theory, context, characteristics (i.e. specific concepts) and methods	Thriving at work across organizational behavior / management literature
Merkuž et al. (2024)	Economic and Business Review	Bibliometric methods (citation, bibliographic coupling, thematic map)	116	2005–2021	Knowledge structure, trends in thriving at work research; **focus:** mainly research, practice too; **contribution:** propositions for future research based on underdeveloped research streams	Thriving at work across organizational behavior / management literature
Istiningtyas et al. (2025)	South Asian Journal of Industrial Psychology	Systematic literature review (PRISMA)	14	2019–2024	Recent research on thriving at work, focused on up to date synthesis; **focus:** research; **contribution:** general propositions for future research on thriving	Thriving at work across organizational behavior / management literature
Manfreda et al. (2025)	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	Integrative systematic literature review (PRISMA), content analysis	31	Not specified	Contextualizing thriving at work in tourism & hospitality; enablers/outcomes across levels; **focus:** research; **contribution:** framework of thriving at work in tourism and hospitality (providing future research propositions)	Tourism and hospitality organizations and thriving at work

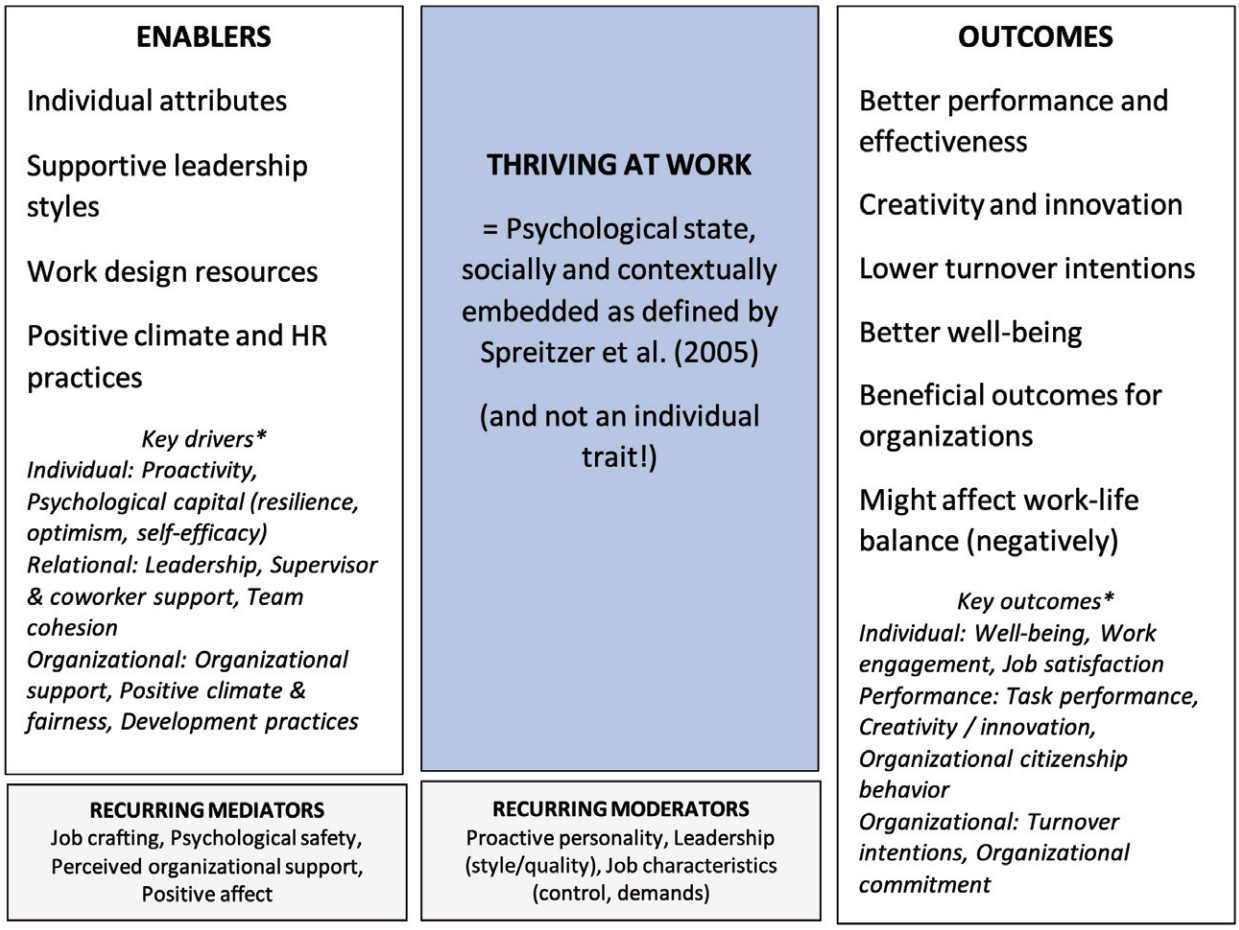
Zhao et al. (2025)	International Journal of Business and Society	Systematic literature review (PRISMA)	103	2009–2024	Definitions/measurement; multilevel antecedents; mechanisms and outcomes; methodological trends; **focus:** research; **contribution:** general propositions for future research	Thriving-at-work research across management / psychology / organizational behavior
Jiang et al. (2026)	*Human Resource Management*	*Perspective/synthesis paper (review of HRM–thriving literature)*	*27*	*Not specified*	*How HRM practices/systems foster thriving; sustaining thriving over time;* ***focus:*** *research;* ***contribution:*** *HRM-centered framework for thriving and future agenda for this particular research stream*	*HRM practices/systems and thriving at work*

cially and contextually embedded, depending on the environment, rather than being an individual trait. Reoccurring enablers of thriving are mostly related to individuals, teams and organizations, emphasizing importance of support, connectivity with others but also willingness to learn. For example, individuals who are more proactive, motivated, emotionally stable or have high emotional intelligence, are optimistic, take charge, are focused, explore, are conscientious, and have good work-life boundary management, report higher levels of thriving, based on research found by 10 different systematic literature reviews. Furthermore, leadership is consistently raised as one of most important enabler of thriving, especially in terms of support, connectivity and ensuring safe environment. This supports teams as well, and in turn helps individuals thrive. Besides great leader, team spirit enhances thriving through peer support, cooperative goals, team cohesion and even how colleagues recognize strengths among each other. Apart from role of leader, organizations enable thriving through good climate, respect, organizational justice, options for professional development, social support, high performance work systems, recognition, flexible working, mentoring, and other adaptable organizational practices. Here it is important to note, that all enablers should be taken into account – one cannot thrive if they possess all personal attributes for thriving, but do not have supportive environment to do so.

In terms of outcomes, reviews consistently indicate that thriving employees have better performance, effectiveness, career, are more creative and innovative, have lower turnover intentions and report better well-being outcomes. Apart from individual outcomes related to employee thriving, organizations also benefit from decreased turnover, organizational citizenship behavior, extra-role performance, and are better when they have to adapt to change. Although thriving is considered as a state that improves employee well-being, performance and knowledge/skills, some of the reviews noted the potential dark side of thriving. Due to increased learning, there might be a conflict between work and nonwork domains. This is also the point I will be discussing below, where I present the extension of REST, specifically how one can maintain thriving based on previous thriving research, as analyzed in my overview of reviews.

Interestingly, reviews (Liang et al., 2024; Manfreda et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2025) also identified mediators and moderators related to thriving. Specifically, Manfreda et al. (2025) talks about mediators that explain the path between enablers and thriving at work experience. Thus, authors highlight that job crafting, psychological safety, perceived organizational support and positive affect have an important mediating effect on thriving. Furthermore, all three mention leadership practices, proactive personality and job characteristics as enhancers of thriving, meaning that those who are more proactive, have better leaders and better job characteristics, compared to those who do not, experience higher levels of thriving at work. Although these are important facts related to thriving, I will not further include mediating and moderating constructs within my actionable design model, but I will rather focus on enablers. In the next section I further elaborate on my results and present the new model as an extension of REST theory.

Figure 2: Summary of major findings based on overview of reviews



*Note: *Key drivers/*Key outcomes are constructs that are most consistently identified within reviews (n = 10) as reported in Appendix 1.*

5 DISCUSSION

This study set out to identify what mechanisms (enablers) and outcomes of thriving are consistently reported across existing literature reviews, and how these insights can inform future theorizing and practice. Synthesizing findings from ten literature reviews of thriving at work, the results reveal a high degree of consistency across the field. Thriving at work is predominantly understood as a socially embedded and context-dependent state, shaped by a combination of individual characteristics, relational dynamics, and organizational conditions. At the individual level, traits and behaviors such as proactivity, motivation, emotional stability, and effective boundary management repeatedly emerge as key enablers. At the relational level, leadership support, trust, and team cohesion are consistently highlighted, while at the organizational level, practices such as supportive climate, fairness, development opportunities, and flexible work arrangements play a central role. In terms of outcomes, thriving is robustly associated with positive individual and organizational consequences, including enhanced performance, creativity, well-being, and reduced turnover intentions.

Building on these findings, the second part of this study addresses how the identified enablers and outcomes can inform guidelines within the REST framework. The consistency of evidence across reviews provides a robust empirical foundation for moving beyond description toward application.

Rather than treating thriving as an abstract or purely individual phenomenon, the synthesized results highlight concrete, recurring mechanisms that can be translated into actionable design. In this regard, the identified individual, relational, and organizational enablers serve as key building blocks for specifying how thriving can be systematically supported in practice, while the documented outcomes clarify why such efforts are critical for both employees and organizations. Accordingly, in the following section, I draw on these findings to extend REST by developing an actionable, workplace-centered perspective on human sustainability, using thriving at work research as its empirical grounding.

5.1 Extending REST: actionable design for human sustainability in the workplace

REST provides structural theory of human sustainability, with thriving as a state where growth, maintenance and generativity are in balance (Barnes et al., 2023). While they build their argumentations on "meta" level – looking at human generally, taking into account all aspect of human life (work and nonwork), my extension focuses solely on workplace enablers of thriving in the context of REST, as supported by the research of thriving at work. Thus, I complement the REST's model with multilevel perspective on thriving as well as institutional enablers of thriving, and how these jointly enable thriving for sustainability. In doing so, I reposition thriving not merely as a product of individual, but as an outcome embedded and shaped by the organization.

As mentioned before, thriving is a joint experience of learning and vitality (Spreitzer et al., 2005), and in order for thriving to occur, individual needs to experience both. This resonates with the REST, as one is looking for a balance between the functions of REST: growth, maintenance and generativity. In my actionable design for human sustainability in the workplace I explain how theoretical functions of REST can be supported to gain and maintain balance from the workplace point of view. It is important to note, that nonwork domain is also important in individual's sustainability, however, the purpose here is to assert recommendations for stakeholders in workplaces, as I connect the concept of thriving at work to the REST.

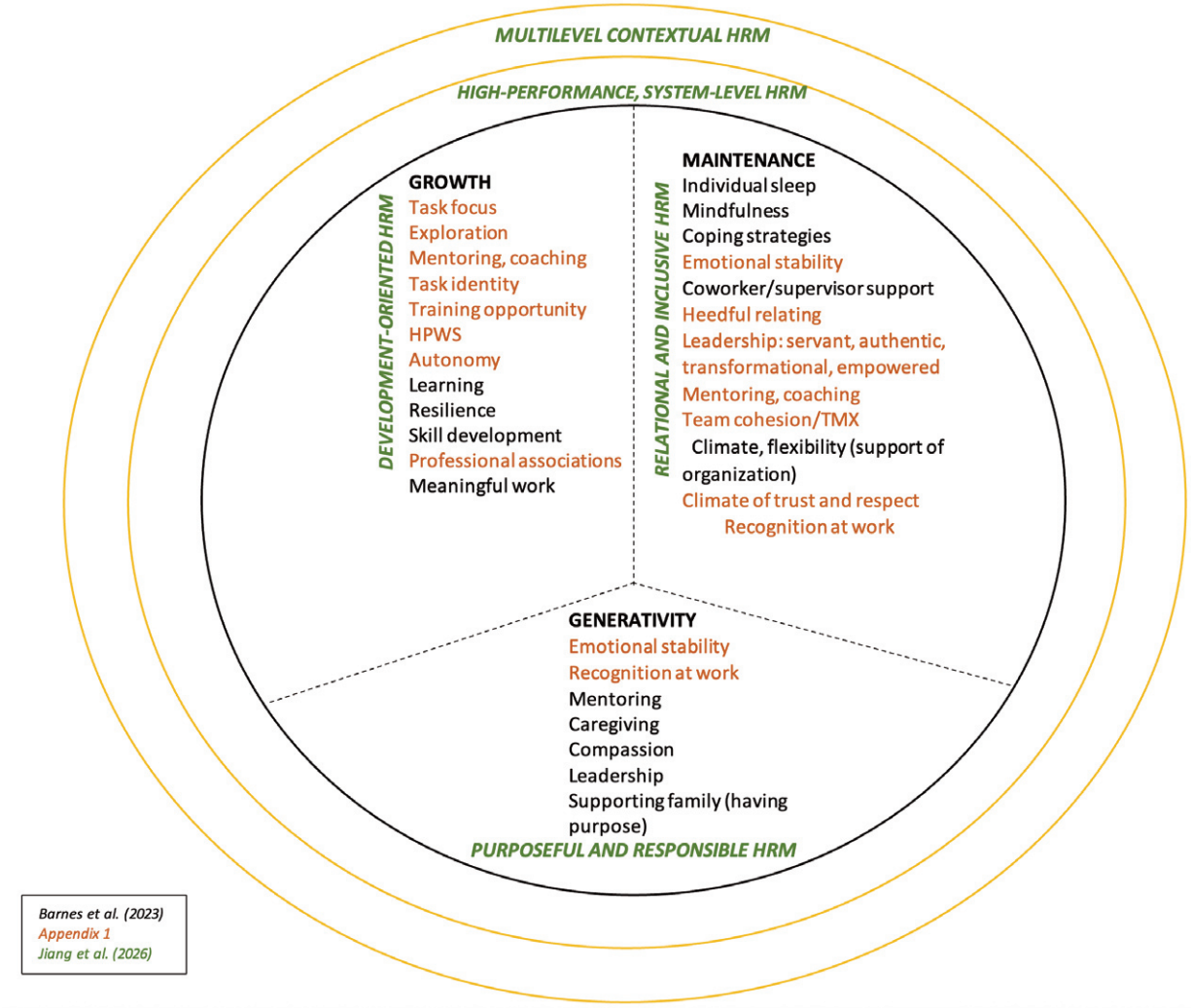
Based on my analyses, I suggest two important aspects of actionable design: 1) focusing on what works related to thriving at work, based on previous research as presented in literature reviews analyzed; and 2) how HR systems can support the three functions explicitly (based on Jiang et al., 2026). The idea depicted in Figure 3 is further explained below.

5.2 Actionable design 1: multilevel aspects supporting thriving at work through REST lens

As literature reviews (presented in Appendix 1) identified, the current body of research on thriving was built on two levels: individuals and collectives (either team or organization), which is in line with the socially embedded model of thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2005), the core theoretical model of thriving at work. Focusing first on individual level, thriving is enabled by agentic work behaviors, which are task focus, exploration and heedful relating. Spreitzer et al. (2005) explain that individuals who are focused on their task at hand, are more exploratory by nature, and when individuals relate heedfully, they demonstrate understanding how their job fits within the bigger picture of the organization. Because of that, individuals are more prone to help others and provide social support. Thus, research has shown that these three behaviors are indeed antecedents of thriving in the workplace (Abid et al., 2016; Merkuž & Mihelič, 2023; Niessen et al., 2012). Spreitzer et al. (2005) further asserts that agentic work behaviors are supported by unit contextual features (decision-making discretion, broad information sharing, climate of trust and respect) and resources produced in the doing of work (knowledge, positive meaning, positive affective resources, relational resources). Empirical research confirmed these propositions, as job resources, (positive) workplace relationships, (positive) leadership practices, and (positive) organizational practices positively affected thriving at work (see Appendix 1). In terms of collective thriving, servant and authentic leadership supported collective thriving, as well as team mindfulness and team-member exchange (Wu & Chen, 2019; Xu & Wang, 2020).

Based on antecedents identified in overview of reviews, I provide specific enables for enabling balance within REST in Figure 3: balancing maintenance, growth and generativity from the perspective of

Figure 3: Actionable design for human sustainability in the workplace



workplaces. Maintenance can be supported by climate of trust and respect, different (positive) leadership styles, mentoring and coaching, team cohesion, and team-member exchange. Thus these are all organizational factors that can help maintain and sustain thriving of employees (Porath et al., 2022; Spreitzer & Hwang, 2019). Furthermore, maintenance can also be supported by heedful relating – in a way we get support from other coworkers, but emotional stability can also help maintenance, as a coping strategy (Meyers, 2024). Another important aspect is recognition at work, which increases thriving, especially the vitality dimension (Moore et al., 2022), making it important for maintenance.

While I identified specific enablers for specific domain of maintenance, in growth function, I see that some enablers can affect all aspects of growth, so I included those at the beginning of the list (same as in generativity). For example, task focus can help generate knowledge (Wang et al., 2014), gaining new skills, building resilience when things do not go the way it should go, and gaining the feeling of meaningful work when task is done, if the task is significant for individual (Allan, 2017). Similar is with other examples: exploration (Greco et al., 2019), task identity (Jiang et al., 2020), and training opportunities (Thakur et al., 2016). I included coaching and mentoring too (as in mainte-

nance), because both can also enable learning (Jones et al., 2016), resilience (Smith, 2017), skill development and give feeling that what we do is meaningful (Lin et al., 2021; Risati et al., 2025). Another, perhaps not so obvious for growth is high performing work systems (HPWS). Systems, that support high performance, maximizing employee capability (Boxall, 2012) enable employees to be best versions of themselves, giving them the opportunity to experience growth and thrive (Cao et al., 2024; Cao et al., 2022), supporting all aspects within the function of growth, based on REST. Another enabler of skill development that I have identified in thriving reviews are professional associations (Sim et al., 2016), where one can build skills and knowledge by engaging with other experts in particular field of work.

Lastly, generativity focuses on the feeling of the individual regarding compassion, mentoring, leadership… having a purpose in your life to help others (Barnes et al., 2023). I recognized emotional stability and recognition at work as enablers of generativity. Firstly, emotional stability because you have to be there for other people, which might be in some distress, and to offer support you need to be emotionally strong (Teng et al., 2009). Secondly, I include recognition at work, because in order to know that you are functioning within generativity, you need to receive some kind of recognition, which in turn positively affects psychological functioning (Merino & Privado, 2015), giving strength to maintain generativity at the level, which does not push one towards a crash.

In this first part I discussed which antecedents (enablers) of thriving support REST functions, indicating concepts that are continuously highlighted as important for thriving at work, and support the theoretical underpinnings of REST. With this I address the first actionable design, as it gives insight to organizations, what kind of workplace environment and relationships are important to support individuals to maintain balance between the functions (related to workplace), serving as psychological activation for thriving. In the next section, I present the second actionable design and I write about institutional enablers, that can enhance thriving, and potentially human sustainability too.

5.3 Actionable design 2: HRM systems supporting thriving at work through REST lens

Jiang et al. (2026) wonderfully explains how thriving can be supported by key HRM lenses. Authors explain that there are five HRM systems that affect thriving at work: high-performance, system-level HRM, development-oriented HRM, purposeful and responsible HRM, relational and inclusive HRM, and multilevel contextual HRM. High-performance, system-level HRM and multilevel contextual HRM are more focused on systematic effects on employee thriving (for example strategies, macro, exo and meso contexts), development-oriented, purposeful and responsible, and relational and inclusive HRM take into account also needs of employees, promotion of meaningful work, and psychological safety, to name just few key emphases stated by the authors. While REST identifies functions as core for sustainable work, it does not specify which organizational systems support each function, and here Jiang et al. (2026) research provides important contributions. I now upgrade the REST and multilevel research on thriving by adding the systematic, institutional perspective of HRM in human sustainability.

Maintenance within REST refers to preserving vitality within bounded homeostasis (Barnes et al., 2023), which would mean that relational and inclusive HRM would be most appropriate to serve as primary enabler of maintenance. Specifically, relational and inclusive HRM promotes belongingness, mutual respect and connection, psychological safety, identity support, as well as diversity, equity and inclusive engagement, which all support the aspects presented within maintenance (Jiang et al., 2026). These key emphases provide stability for employees which can protect and replenish vitality, as a part of thriving, through socially supportive environments, as thriving is a socially embedded phenomenon.

Next, growth (as a part of learning in thriving) focuses in expanding skills, learning new things and be adaptive over time (Barnes et al., 2023), so development-oriented HRM practices would best fit this perspective. Focusing on personal growth, development of self-identity within organization, building competences, support for self-directed learning and career adaptability, as well as alignment with evolving needs and profes-

sional aspirations (Jiang et al., 2026) helps employees expand their capabilities, giving the opportunity to build knowledge, resilience for sustainable adaptive growth.

Generativity, related to meaning and contribution, purposeful and responsible HRM would provide best support here, especially because Jiang et al. (2026) key emphases are ethical responsibility, sustainability, societal contribution, promotion of meaningful work and collective well-being, alignment between individual purpose and organizational and societal values. Thus, by aligning work with broader societal and ethical goals, generativity would be further supported by this, as individuals would know how they fit the larger picture, giving them meaning, which in turn enhances thriving (Goh et al., 2022; Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Lastly, high-performance, system-level HRM and multilevel contextual HRM also provide important contributions to the REST model. High-performance, system-level HRM's emphases are on system integration, consistency, consensus, strategic alignment of HRM practices, and symbolic signaling of performance expectations and support (Jiang et al., 2026), which reflect system-level regulation. High-performance, system-level HRM configurations shape overall distribution and prioritization of resources across all three REST functions. Within REST, such systems influence whether the dynamic balancing of life functions becomes sustainable or distorted due to overemphasis on performance-driven growth. Thus, high-performance, system-level HRM is not related to a function directly, but it serves as a structural amplifier. Multilevel contextual HRM is advancement to a higher level – reflecting contextual embedding, taking into account the environmental constraints and affordances that shape the homeostatic range. Specifically, Jiang et al.'s (2026) key emphases related to multilevel context HRM are embeddedness across macro, exo and meso contexts, systematic alignment with external norms and internal dynamics, and ecological integration of structure, leadership and policy. Thus, looking beyond system-level coordination, multilevel contextual HRM underscores that enabling sustainability through thriving depends on nested organizational and institutional environments too.

To sum up, I distinguish between function specific HRM configurations as proposed by Jiang et al. (2026), that directly enable maintenance, growth and generativity, functions of REST; and systematic, higher level HRM systems that shape distribution of resources across the functions (high-performance, system-level HRM), and highlight environmental boundaries within which thriving can unfold (multilevel contextual HRM). With this, I assert that we need HRM systems to regulate balance, shape boundaries so it can enable vitality, learning and meaning for thriving at work and human sustainability in general.

6 THEORETICAL VALUE OF PROPOSED ACTIONABLE DESIGN FOR HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY

Above I discuss how one can balance maintenance, growth and generativity through the lens of thriving research. These theoretical propositions from both actionable designs have important theoretical contributions for REST theory, thriving at work research and human sustainability.

The theoretical value of this study lies in its repositioning of thriving from an individually enacted state toward a phenomenon that is institutionally enabled and structurally embedded. While REST theory conceptualizes thriving as a dynamic balance between growth, maintenance, and generativity, it implicitly assumes that individuals are the primary agents responsible for achieving and sustaining this balance (Barnes et al., 2023). This paper challenges that assumption by integrating insights from the socially embedded model of thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2005), demonstrating that thriving cannot be fully sustained without accounting for the organizational and relational contexts in which individuals are situated. In doing so, I extend the argument of Barnes et al. (2023) by showing that individual agency alone is insufficient for long-term human sustainability; rather, thriving emerges through the alignment of individual efforts with supportive institutional conditions. This shift contributes theoretically by reframing thriving as a contextually produced outcome, not merely a personal accomplishment. With this I address 1) calls by Barnes et al. (2023) on reinforcing the REST theory; 2) calls by Porath et al. (2022) by providing an actionable design how workplace thriving can help employee sustainability.

Moreover, by complementing REST theory with empirically grounded insights from thriving at work research, this study advances a more differentiated understanding of imbalance patterns beyond simplistic high versus low performance distinctions. These patterns reveal how employees may appear functional while operating in states of survival rather than genuine thriving, thereby exposing limitations in existing theoretical assumptions. Importantly, this conceptual refinement bridges theory and practice (see chapter on practical value below), as it enables clearer identification of when and how imbalances occur within organizational settings.

Finally, the paper advances REST theory by transforming it from a meta-level sustainability framework into an actionable design model for human sustainability in the workplace. By specifying multilevel enablers and systematically linking them to institutional mechanisms, particularly through HRM systems, the study demonstrates how organizations can intentionally design conditions that support balanced thriving over time. In this sense, the core theoretical contribution is not only the integration of previously disconnected perspectives, but also the repositioning of thriving as structurally embedded, thereby opening new avenues for both theorizing and practical application in the field of human sustainability.

7 PRACTICAL VALUE OF PROPOSED ACTIONABLE DESIGN FOR HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY

In this part, I discuss how stakeholders within organization can use actionable design to support sustainability at work. I continue with describing suggestions at different levels, as thriving is enabled in different levels too. Thus, I will address recommendations at micro, meso and macro level, for each REST function separately.

7.1 Designing for maintenance

As explained by Barnes et al. (2023), maintenance is about protecting energy, psychological safety and relational stability, so growth does not become depletion. They emphasize the importance of supportive organization in terms of climate, but also support from coworkers and superiors. Thus, primary focus should be on relational and inclusive HRM (Jiang et al., 2026), leveraging policies that would enhance psychological safety and relational stability within the organization (some great examples of creating psychological safe workplace can be found in McCausland (2023)). Another beneficial team-level enablers are team cohesion, which is proven to be an enabler of thriving (Jiang et al., 2024) and good team-member exchange (Xu & Wang, 2020). There should be a collective reflection on what is draining us, discussing workload calibration, where leaders have an important role signaling care before performance, give space for recovery and model appropriate emotional regulation. In terms of everyday work practices at micro level, building psychological safety into meetings is important, as well as proper recognition systems which reinforce stability. For example, former OpenTable CEO, Christa Quarles emphasized that it is okay if ideas are not perfect at the beginning but that course-correction is much faster (OpenTable, 2016; Edmondson, 2018). Thus, it is important to recognize the process, not just the outcome. Furthermore, I showed that heedful relating is an important part of thriving, thus it would be beneficial to position heedful relating as a skill, training employees to have clear vision how their work affects the bigger picture of organization. As mentioned before, these practices cannot be done without the institutional support, creating appropriate climate and giving the resources to employees for better maintenance related to work.

7.2 Designing for growth

Growth corresponds to learning dimension of thriving, thus the challenge here is to enable exploration and learning without exhausting maintenance reserves (Barnes et al., 2023). Again, system-level changes are the first that should be appropriately prepared and managed, for success on lower levels. Development-oriented HRM focuses on competency-based career progression so employees can be adaptable during rapid changes (Jiang et al., 2026). It is important to avoid over-activation of growth, leaving employees the space for self-directed learning, not rewarding constant acceleration. Thus, organizations should provide resources for growth, not pressure it at all cost, but

provide clear goals for a particular job position. This could help employees appropriately assess if they have the capabilities for growth, or if the job position is currently out of their ability to perform. One interesting way of enabling learning within organization is learning in flow. Tupper and Ellis (2023) highlight three principles we need to have in mind when we want to create a culture that supports learning in flow: learning is integrated, is active and is a routine. They assert learning as a job, and should not be scheduled, which would increase learning people gain from the meetings, projects and other parts of their jobs that already exist. Furthermore, proactive mindset is a must if organization want to include learning in the flow of work. And when this becomes effective, it just becomes a part of routine and a part of a culture (either team or organization) (Tupper & Ellis, 2023).

Next, on team level, developmental feedback culture should be encouraged, focusing on coaching conversations rather only on annual reviews related to performance evaluation. In fact, performance evaluation should be separated from growth conversations, so employees understand how they can get to the level they want, what they need to do, and then separately evaluate if they are successful or not. (you can read more about why coaching matters and find arguments why is good to have a leader as a coach in Ibarra and Scoular (2019)). In terms of work design at micro-level, thriving is enabled by task focus and exploration (Merkuž & Mihelič, 2023; Niessen et al., 2012), thus organizations should provide safe space for learning for employees and rotational task assignments, where employees could also develop their skills further. Great idea is also for people from other departments to present their work and how it relates to the team, or giving access to professional associations, as is ACCA for accounting profession.

7.3 Designing for generativity

Generativity is a bit different than maintenance and growth – it focuses on purpose and meaning and nevertheless, on growth for individual through outward service, not serving self. Here purposeful and responsible HRM has most effect, where organizations can be clear about their ethical decision-making frameworks, promoting meaningful work as well as well-being, and providing information about organizational values, so employees can see if their personal values are aligned with those of the organization (Jiang et al., 2026; Porath et al., 2022). For example, Joly (2022) describes five principles of purposeful leadership, which he used as former chairmen and CEO of Best Buy – a leadership practice that focuses on: 1) being clear about your purpose; 2) being clear about your role; 3) being clear about whom you serve; 4) be driven by values; and 5) be authentic. These principles can directly reflect in collective purpose of employees, so it is even more important to align on the impact the company has/wants to have on different shareholders. Furthermore, organizations should encourage employees to mentor junior staff, or even provide reverse mentoring for senior leaders. It is also important to acknowledge and recognize contribution of employees – either small or big.

7.4 High-performance, system-level HRM

Jiang et al. (2026) explains that high-performance, system-level HRM fosters development climate and psychological empowerment to employees, when HRM signals strong and positive attributions, which can inherently support employee thriving. Thus, at system-level it should be monitored if imbalances occur, related to the three functions. For example, if organizations recognize a pattern with absent leaves due to burnout and that high output is constantly required, growth and maintenance are in likely imbalance. For other examples see Table 2, where I show early-warning indicators that imbalances are occurring among maintenance, growth or generativity.

7.5 Multilevel contextual HRM

Lastly, at the highest, contextual level, thriving is enabled through embeddedness across macro, exo and meso contexts, taking into account external as well as internal dynamics (Jiang et al., 2026). In terms of multilevel contextual HRM, in order to ensure balance through thriving at work, organizations should be mindful about external pressures and how they affect their employees, especially in the

Table 2: Organizational situations and imbalances of REST functions

Critical situations arising in organizations	Where the imbalance lies?
Higher number of employee burnout; high productivity is required	Growth > Maintenance
Constant upskilling demands, no recovery periods	
Constant connectivity related to work	
Pride in exhaustion	
Decreased psychological safety	
Increased presenteeism	
Employees are comfortable; reports of stagnation, employees do not learn new skills	Maintenance > Growth
Low innovation output	
Employees report they feel stuck in their current work roles	
Low internal mobility	
Risk avoidance dominating decision-making	
General decline in learning motivation, declining engagement	
Cynicism at work	Low Generativity
Value misalignment complaints	
High emotional exhaustion in care-oriented professions	
Whistleblowing incidents	
Withdrawal from mentoring or helping behaviors	
Reduced voluntary contribution	
Quiet disengagement among previously purpose-driven employees	

world of uncertainty. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, late Marriott CEO Arne Sorenson head on addressed the situation that arose globally through a video message. He first offered support to employees, who were affected by the virus, and explained how their business is affected and what they are doing to mitigate the crisis. Providing honest message, but in uplifting and inspiring note helped employees to understand the situation, so they can adapt accordingly (Joly, 2022). When you have a thriving workforce, they can be more adaptable (Zhao et al., 2025) in such global crises that are arising continuously in past years. Therefore, there should be policies that guide employees in case of macro shocks, such as wars, or new technological advancements like artificial intelligence. Organizations should also think about workload norms and how they align with reality of the industry. If the rules are set in a smart way on a contextual level, organizations can quickly handle critical situations that might occur. And by being adaptable as organization, it can help employees to be adaptable too, resulting in better chances for them to thrive. This, when balance is preserved, thriving at work becomes an outcome possible not only for employees, but for organization as a whole too. Below, in Table 3, I provide a summary what are indicators if the REST function does not include, and what should be leading indicators, taken into account to search for early signals if imbalance is arising, meaning that employees are not thriving, but are going towards surviving. Examples can be used and adapted to the needs of organization, depending on the system an organization has.

In conclusion, the practical value of actionable design for human sustainability lies in its ability to systematically balance maintenance, growth, and generativity across micro, meso, and macro levels of the organization. By embedding supportive HRM prac-

Table 3: Summary of potential indicators for each REST function

Function	Lagging indicators	Leading indicators (early signals)
Maintenance	Burnout rate Absenteeism Sick leave duration Stress-related health claims Voluntary turnover due to strain Conflict incidents Lower presenteeism Reduced collaboration quality	Psychological safety scores Perceived workload fairness Recovery opportunity access Trust climate Boundary control (ability to disconnect) Peer support ratings Emotional exhaustion (indicating early-stage burnout) Stress Utilization of well-being resources
Growth	Lower innovation output Lower success for change implementation Lower promotion rates Low productivity growth Adaptability during disruption Performance improvement trends Talent pipeline strength	Learning hours per employee Participation in training Internal mobility rates Developmental feedback frequency Skill acquisition metrics Exploration behavior reports Innovation proposal submissions Career adaptability scores Coaching participation
Generativity	Retention of high contributors Discretionary effort Stakeholder trust indicators Ethical incident rates Employer reputation Sustained team cohesion	Meaning-at-work scores Purpose alignment ratings Mentoring participation Knowledge-sharing frequency Helping behavior reports Organizational citizenship behavior Ethical climate ratings Voice behavior on values Cross-team collaboration levels Recognition for contribution

tices, fostering psychologically safe and development-oriented environments, and aligning work with purpose and values, organizations can create conditions where employees not only perform but genuinely thrive. Importantly, this requires continuous monitoring of early signals and imbalances, as well as responsiveness to broader contextual pressures. When these elements are integrated effectively, thriving at work becomes a sustainable, organization-wide outcome rather than an individual exception.

8 LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

My paper is not without limitation, which should be addressed accordingly. In this paper, I only address thriving *at work*, ignoring the other important aspect that is emphasized by Barnes et al. (2023): nonwork. It is important for researchers to examine the effects of thriving outside of work, as it evidently has important effect in work life too (Porath et al., 2022), as well as in sustainability for individuals. Furthermore, I only talk about when functions are in balance, ignoring the fact that for short periods of time we can sustain imbalance and still be thriving. This is explained more in detail in Barnes et al. (2023), here I just focused on how thriving research supports what authors have proposed for REST model. In terms of future research, it would be interesting if we could see how cultural context, industry type, career/lifespan stage or crisis periods affect perception of REST function and thriving in the workplace, and how HRM systems deal with such conditions. It would be also interesting to test if leading indicators mentioned in Table 3 can actually help identify difficulties when they occur. This could be tested by using intervention studies in organizations, for example.

In conclusion, I show that thriving is not an individual state, but is rather systematically regulated. In this paper I focus on the workplace aspect of thriving and how can balance between REST functions of maintenance, growth and generativity reflect thriving in the workplace. Further, I show how HRM systems can serve as enablers of balance between the functions, as Jiang et al. (2026) propose how HRM systems support thriving at work. The main message here is that sustainability does not emerge from maximization, but rather from dynamic equilibrium by finding the right fit between maintenance, growth and generativity. We can enable that by using HRM systems as structural foundation upon which we build a sustainable workplace – by employing right employees, and equipping leaders to act as micro-regulators of maintenance, growth and generativity, so that organizations cultivate thriving rather than merely demanding best performance and leaving employees to survive.

EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Teorija omejene trajnostnosti zaposlenih (Restricted Employee Sustainability Theory; REST) razume trajnostno uspevanje kot dinamično ravnovesje med ohranjanjem, rastjo in generativnostjo. Čeprav REST pojasni, zakaj je takšno ravnovesje strukturno nujno, ne pove, kako naj organizacije v praksi ustvarijo pogoje, ki ga dejansko omogočajo. Ta članek zapolnjuje to vrzel z združitvijo teorije REST in večnivojskih raziskav uspevanja pri delu. Na podlagi desetih preglednih člankov, objavljenih med letoma 2020 in 2026, predstavim uveljavljene dejavnike uspevanja ter jih znova interpretiram skozi prizmo treh temeljnih funkcij teorije REST. Na tej osnovi predlagam praktično oblikovalsko ogrodje, ki loči med dejavniki, specifičnimi za posamezne funkcije, torej tistimi, ki neposredno podpirajo ohranjanje, rast ali generativnost, ter sistemskimi konfiguracijami managementa človeških virov, ki uravnavajo razporeditev virov med njimi. Pri tem poudarjam, da uspevanje ni le stvar posameznikove volje in prizadevanja, temveč ga v veliki meri omogočajo institucionalni pogoji. Prispevek k teoriji je trojen: (1) natančneje opredeli, kako lahko organizacije podpirajo in ohranjajo uspevanje pri delu, (2) prepozna kvalitativno različne vzorce neravnovesja, ki segajo onkraj preprostih razlik v delovni uspešnosti, ter (3) dopolnjuje teorijo REST z uvedbo praktičnega oblikovalskega modela za človekovo trajnostnost v delovnem okolju. Na koncu so obravnavane še praktične implikacije za različne ravni organizacije.

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Appendix 1: Overview of thriving reviews – enablers and outcomes of thriving at work

Review	Topic/Focus	Enablers	Outcomes
Moloney et al. (2020)	Thriving in healthcare organizations	Empowerment Autonomy Decision-making latitude Motivation Mood of the organization Favorable behaviors (trust, respect, appreciation, good relationships with leaders) Climate of civility and disrection Engagement Organizational justice Enabling environment Job demands/stressors (negative impact) Control/demand (negative impact) Professional development Quality of care (negative impact if stressful, negative) Availability of resources Togetherness with colleagues Social support Collegial relations Reciprocity Leaders' connectivity Support from managers Interpersonal relationships between management and staff Acknowledgment	Nurse wellbeing Happiness Engagement (decreased) burnout (decreased) turnover High-level performance Development Success Holistic functioning
Shahid et al. (2021)	General thriving	Leadership Empowering leadership Authentic leadership Servant leadership Supervisor support Supervisor supportive climate Resources Belongingness Perceived organizational support Work home enrichment Personality dimensions Detrimental factors Deenergizing relationships Perception of job deprivation Workplace violence Disability	N/A

Rehmat et al. (2021)	General thriving	Perceived stress Work engagement Psychological capital Core self-evaluation Proactive personality Self-determination Autonomy orientation Openness to experience Promotion focus and prevention focus Empathy Acts of gratitude Acts of compassion Emotional expression Resilience Fairness perception Connectivity Perceived organizational support Work environment (psychological safety) Work family enrichment Transformational leadership Civility Supervisory support Supportive co-worker Empowering leadership Trust Pro-social motivation Employee involvement climate Authentic leadership Family supportive supervisor behavior Hindrance stressors and challenge stressors Leader-member exchange Relationship building Managerial coaching Positive affect Negative affect (negative impact) Heedful relation	Life satisfaction Self-adaptation Health outcomes In-role performance Organizational citizenship behavior Self development Job satisfaction Organizational commitment Turnover intention Task/individual/employee performance Innovative work behavior Creative behavior Career development initiative sHelping behavior Absenteeism Well being Voice behavior Employee engagement Burnout (decreased if thriving)

Goh et al. (2022)	General thriving	*Individual thriving* Agentic work behaviors Task focus Exploration Heedful relating Individual differences Proactive personality Prosocial motivation Emotional stability Core self-evaluation Future self-views Job demands and resources Demands: time pressure, role overload, role ambiguity, expatriationResources: meaningful work, coaching, task identity Organizational practices High performance work systems Training opportunities Recognition Flexible working Opportunities to work beyond retirement Workplace relationships Climates of trust and civility Social support Mentoring Professional associations Leadership Servant/service Authentic Transformational Leader-member exchange Empowering *Collective thriving* Leadership Servant Authentic Team characteristics Team-member exchange Team mindfulness	*Individual thriving* Health and Well being Psychological health Life satisfaction Work-family enrichment Negative affect (decreased if thriving) Psychological distress (decreased if thriving) Emotional exhaustion (decreased if thriving) Performance In-role performance Extra-role performance Employee voice Job crafting Taking charge/proactivity Creativity Job attitudes and career development Professional identity Perceived employability Feedback seeking Work engagement Organizational commitment Job satisfaction Career adaptability Career resilience Career commitment Career engagement Career satisfaction Turnover intention *Collective thriving* Team in-role performance Team extra-role performance

Liang et al. (2024)	General thriving	Individual characteristics Demographics Proactive Personality Conscientiousness Optimism Motivation Psychological Capital Self-Esteem Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction Identification (In)Civility Play Trust Fairness Perception Resilience Core-self Evaluation Leadership Empower Leadership Inclusive Leadership Authentic Leadership Benevolent Leadership Differential Leadership Ethical Leadership Exploitative Leadership Humble Leadership Servant Leadership Transformational Leadership Zhongyong Leadership Working conditions Job resources Supervisor/Coworker Support Leader/Team-member exchange Family-Work Affect Enrichment Strengths-Based Human Resource System High-performance Work System Fun HR practices Challenge Stressors Crafting Work Meaningfulness Paradox Mindset Managerial Coaching Entrepreneur Identity Aspiration Perceived Competitive Climate CSR Hedonic Relating Perceived Competitive Climate Personal resources Positive Affect Taking Charge Psychological Empowerment Task Focus Exploration Work Engagement Formalization	Work Performance / Attitude Creative Performance Job Performance Job Satisfaction Career Adaptability Career Commitment Career Regret Career Resilience Goal Process Work Behavior Innovative Work Behavior Workplace Bullying Workplace Deviance Organizational Citizenship Behavior Helping Behavior Proactive Customer Service Behavior Compliance Behavior Voice Behavior Health Well-being Psychological Health Burnout (decreased when thriving)

		Organizational Compassion Needs-supplies Fit Paradox Mindset Managerial Coaching Mindfulness Goal Orientation HRM Attributions Job demands Family work Conflict Workplace Ostracism Hindrance Stressors Personal demands Knowledge hiding Role Ambiguity HRM Attributions	
		Moderators (for antecedents and outcomes) Big Five / Proactive Personality Perceived Overqualification Work Significance Task Interdependence Team Affective Tone Locus of Control Leader Humility Achievement Orientation Emotional Exhaustion Role Ambiguity Need for Caring Polychronicity	
Merkuž et al. (2024)	General thriving	N/A: general topics are described	N/A: general topics are described
Istiningtyas et al. (2025)	General thriving	Leadership Paradoxical Ethical Inclusive Transformational Individual traits Proactive personality Self-efficacy Optimism Resilience Organizational practices Mentoring Support systems Adaptable organizational practices	Negative impacts due to thriving Insomnia Work-life conflict

Manfreda et al. (2025)	Thriving in hospitality and tourism	*Individual level* Personality traits and dispositions Self-accountability Individual positive perspective Taking charge Trait conscientiousness Proactive career orientation Work–life interface Problems at home/family incivility Family support Career and vocational factors Growth and career-oriented strategies *Team level – leaders and co-workers* Quality of leadership and management Leader–employee exchange Authentic leadership Empowering leadership Servant leadership Transformational leadership Inclusive leadership Leader humility Leader support Supervisor support Social and peer support Peer network/social system/co-worker support Workplace dynamics Workplace discrimination *Organisational level* Organisational support and culture Psychological contract fulfilment Perceived organisational support Organisational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) Climate for innovation Work design Job control Task variety Performance and development systems Experienced service-oriented high-performance work systems Work performance systems Knowledge sharing Organisational roles Illegitimate tasks Role conflict Perceived workload Manager role ambiguity *Customer level* Customer–employee exchange Customer participation	*Individual level* Psychological health Distress Psychological health Hedonic well-being (e.g., happiness, pleasure) Eudaimonic well-being (e.g., growth, purpose, self-esteem) Career development Career adaptability Career identity Career satisfaction Career commitment Career advancement Career retention Career turnover intentions Job attitudes and behaviours Job satisfaction Work engagement Task performance (in-role behaviour) Creative behaviour Employee creativity Employee innovative behaviour Organisational citizenship behaviour toward customers Prosociality Extra-role service behaviour Work–life interface Work–life harmony Work–family enrichment Life–family identity *Organisational level* Creative productive customer service performance Extra-role customer service Service innovation performance

		Mediators Job crafting toward strengths and interests Family–work conflict Family–work enrichment Workplace spirituality Psychological safety Health relating Employee role ambiguity Collective mindfulness Empowering leadership Perceived organisational support Change-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour Perceived career growth *Moderators* Individual traits Gender Culture Career calling Work–life segregation preferences Overqualification Segmentation boundary management preference Work centrality Organisation-based self-esteem Resilience Leadership and managerial influence Supervisor support Managerial coaching Servant leadership Supervisor negative affect Leader competency Manager role ambiguity Organisational and environmental context External crises (e.g., Covid-19 impact and anxiety) Shared organisational social exchange Psychological contract fulfilment

Zhao et al. (2025)	General thriving	Individual level factors Proactive personality Task focus Thoughtful care Emotional intelligence Job crafting Job self-efficacy High-activated positive affect Core self-evaluation Organizational level factors Servant leadership Inclusive leadership Self-sacrificing leadership Organizational culture Perception of fairness Justice Psychological safety Diversity, equity and inclusion Organizational support mechanisms Psychological ownership Family-supportive supervisor behavior Leader-member exchange Flexible work arrangements Access to training Mental health resources High-performance work systems Team level factors Team cooperative goals Team cohesion High-activated positive affect Colleague strengths recognition Contextual level factors Workplace ostracism (negative effect) Cross-cultural backgrounds Economic environment Technological environment Social support networks Emotional networks Work environment	Individual Well-being Happiness Satisfaction Positive work attitudes Job performance Burnout (reduced if thriving) Enthusiasm Commitment Fatigue and emotional exhaustion (reduced if thriving) Career satisfaction Career identity Sense of achievement Personal growth and development Career advancement Continuous skill development Psychological resilience Positive emotions Coping abilities Innovative behavior Work engagement Work-family conflict Organizational commitment and loyalty Organizational outcomes Organizations' adaptability to change Innovation capabilities Team cohesion Task interdependence
		Moderating mechanisms Job control Career adaptability Self-leadership Resilience Regulatory focus Boundary management strategies Psychological capital	
Jiang et al. (2026)		N/A: a perspective paper	N/A: a perspective paper

Sources: Goh et al. (2022); Istiningtyas et al. (2025); Liang et al. (2024); Manfreda et al. (2025); Moloney et al. (2020); Rehmat et al. (2021); Shahid et al. (2021); Zhao et al. (2025)