



Workplace Stress Dynamics and Employee Psychological Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

Work stress is a psychosocial phenomenon that's becoming more intense as the demands of the modern workplace get more complex. This study aims to take a comprehensive look at workplace stress dynamics and how it affects employees' psychological well-being. The research uses a qualitative approach through a literature review method. The findings show that work stress is influenced by a complex interaction of individual factors, job factors, and the culture and structure of the organization. Chronic work stress has been shown to contribute to a higher risk of burnout, anxiety disorders, depression, and a decline in work life quality. Organizational support, healthy leadership, and flexible work policies have been shown to act as protective factors. These findings highlight the importance of a holistic approach in human resource management to maintain mental health and sustain organizational performance

INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty years, the work environment has transformed, becoming more competitive and focused on productivity, while quickly adopting digital technology. This shift has significantly changed the way employees work, affecting jobs in both government and the private sector. Workers now need to handle multiple tasks at once, adapt to new situations easily, and achieve ambitious goals quickly.

Stress is a natural response experienced by individuals when facing demands that are perceived to exceed their abilities. To a certain extent, stress can be adaptive and boost performance. However, excessive stress actually reduces an individual's ability to manage tasks and triggers physical as well as psychological problems. The development by Lazarus and Folkman explains that stress occurs when individuals assess environmental demands as exceeding the resources they have. Technology, globalization, and digitalization have significantly changed the nature of work. Increasing demands for productivity, high performance targets, and the need for work time flexibility are becoming sources of increasingly complex psychological pressure. (Lazarus R S, 1984). A common cause of stress is work-related stress. This happens because the workplace is an area where various elements come together, such as people, budget resources, physical goods, and data. People in the work environment will keep interacting with their surroundings, but these interactions are not always positive. Good relationships among work elements will lead to strong performance and reduce stress. On the other hand, negative interactions will result in low work performance and increase stress. Mangkunegara explained that work stress arises when job demands are not balanced with an individual's ability to manage their psychological resources. Stress is no longer seen just as an individual issue, but as an organizational problem that reflects the quality of the work management system. National research shows that the level of employee work stress in Indonesia tends to increase along with higher performance targets and long working hours. In addition, social and cultural conditions also influence the dynamics of work stress. Values like collectivism, respect for superiors, and a hierarchical work culture can reinforce psychological pressure, especially when workplace communication is not effective. (Mangkunegara, 2013)

In an increasingly competitive work environment, employees have to follow the standards set by the company they work for, which can include rules, work schedules, salaries, or a work environment that might not always support physical and mental balance. This situation leads to ongoing stress and can result in job-related anxiety, unless it's balanced with mental strength and a strong dedication to the job. Dedication plays an important role in boosting a person's mental ability to handle work-related stress. According to Sutrisno, work pressure that continues over time can lead to prolonged stress and job anxiety if it is not balanced with employees' psychological adaptability (Sutrisno, 2016). Negative interactions among work elements are proven to correlate with decreased performance and increased psychological pressure. In an increasingly competitive work environment, employees are required to comply with organizational standards, performance targets, and tight schedules. This

situation can cause prolonged stress if not balanced with adequate psychological capacity (Cooper, 2001). Individuals with high levels of dedication and work commitment tend to have better resilience in facing such pressure.

In the context of organizations, work stress has been linked to various negative impacts, such as decreased individual performance, increased absenteeism, and a high tendency for employee turnover (Sutrisno, 2016). Besides that, work stress also has significant implications for employees' mental health, marked by increased anxiety, emotional pressure, and prolonged psychological fatigue (Dewi, 2015)

Kesejahteraan psikologis menjadi indikator penting kualitas kehidupan kerja. (Ryff, 1989) mengemukakan bahwa kesejahteraan psikologis tidak hanya berkaitan dengan kebahagiaan, tetapi juga mencakup perkembangan diri, tujuan hidup, dan hubungan interpersonal yang sehat. Oleh karena itu, pemahaman yang mendalam mengenai hubungan antara stres kerja dan kesejahteraan psikologis menjadi krusial dalam konteks manajemen organisasi modern.

Psychological well-being is an important indicator of work life quality. (Ryff, 1989) suggested that psychological well-being is not just about happiness, but also includes self-development, life purpose, and healthy interpersonal relationships. Therefore, having a deep understanding of the relationship between work stress and psychological well-being becomes crucial in the context of modern organizational management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work stress has wide-ranging effects on employees' physical, emotional, and behavioral conditions. Research by Cooper, Dewe, and O'Driscoll emphasizes that work stress not only lowers performance but also impacts long-term mental and physical health. In an organizational context, this phenomenon is linked to higher turnover, absenteeism, and low work commitment. Meanwhile, the concept of psychological well-being has become an important focus in modern psychology. Ryff argues that well-being doesn't just mean being free from stress, but also fulfilling psychological functions like positive interpersonal relationships, personal growth, and life purpose. (Ryff, 1989)

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to understand phenomena comprehensively through descriptive data analysis sourced from literature and scientific documents (Sugiyono, 2019). The researcher first looked for information related to employee performance. The researcher uses citation techniques to identify the original source when quoting and to cite something. Based on those sources, the researcher analyzes and compares the research results and sources with each other to summarize and look for similarities and differences. This method is effective in helping the researcher examine employee performance based on the factors that influence it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Conceptualization of Work Stress From the Perspective of Psychology and Organization

Work stress is an adaptive response to work environment pressures that are perceived as threats or challenges. (Beehr, 1978) views work stress as the interaction between working conditions and individual characteristics. The transactional model (Lazarus R S, 1984) emphasizes the importance of cognitive processes in assessing stressors, which means that stress is not only determined by objective situations but also by an individual's subjective perception.

From an organizational psychology perspective, work-related stress is understood as a mix of various elements that come from within a person and from their environment. Things like a person's mindset, adaptability, past job history, and feelings about their job are examples of personal elements. Examples of external elements include workplace specifications, pressure from those in leadership positions, disagreements about job tasks, and having too much work to complete. According to Cooper, stress is no longer seen as merely an individual phenomenon, but rather as a product of job design, organizational culture, and performance management systems. (Cooper, 2001) Therefore, workplace stress dynamics need to be analyzed in a multidimensional way.

2. Organizational Factors as the Main Source of Work Stress a Workload and Performance Pressure

Excessive workload is one of the main stressors. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model explains that high work demands without adequate resources lead to emotional and physical exhaustion (Bakker & Evangelia Demerouti, 2007). Workers with unrealistic targets tend to feel insecure, lose control, and experience chronic fatigue. The pressure to meet certain Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) often makes stress dynamics even worse.

a. Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity

Role conflict happens when employees face conflicting demands, while role ambiguity shows up when there's a lack of clarity about tasks and responsibilities. Both of these situations have been shown to increase stress and lower job satisfaction (House, 1981).

b. Organizational Culture and Leadership Style

An extremely competitive work culture, lack of transparency, and authoritarian leadership style increase the risk of psychological stress. On the other hand, transformational leadership is associated with a greater sense of psychological safety and job well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

3. Work Stress Indicators

Work-related stress has become a major issue in today's workplace because it can harm a person's mental and physical health, which eventually leads to problems in everyday life.

To properly assess and analyze this phenomenon, experts have identified various signs and signals. The purpose of these indicators is to help determine how work stress affects a person's job and personal experience. Here are some indicators that can measure work stress in employees, including:

A. Job Satisfaction

According to most employees, job satisfaction is one of the key indicators in assessing work stress. A workload that doesn't match an individual's capacity, lack of a sense of achievement, and minimal recognition from supervisors can reduce job satisfaction and trigger loss of motivation, burnout, and emotional frustration, which can lead to chronic work stress (Mangkunegara, 2013).

B. Work-Life Balance

An imbalance between job demands and personal life, such as long working hours, work interruptions outside of work hours, and inflexible organizational policies, can lead to excessive stress and emotional exhaustion (Gunawan, 2015). This is very common in jobs with long hours, high target pressure, or shift work.

C. Psychological Health at the Workplace

Psychological health at work is highly influenced by the work environment. Feeling unsafe, scared, or anxious while working can become a pretty serious problem. A psychologically unhealthy work environment, like conflicts, lack of support, and intimidation, triggers feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and distress, which affect employees' mental health (Dewi, 2015)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research shows that work-related stress is an unavoidable aspect of today's work environment, mainly due to the push for higher efficiency, ever-evolving technology, and complicated relationships between people at work. A little stress can be helpful, even boosting someone's performance. However, stress can become dangerous when job demands are too heavy for someone to handle, which then negatively affects their physical and mental health as well as their performance. Studies have revealed that work stress arises not only from personal problems but significantly from workplace-related issues such as excessive workload, unclear or conflicting job roles, toxic work environments, and leaders who don't provide adequate support. It has been proven that unpleasant interactions between different parts of the workplace can increase mental suffering and lower someone's performance. Prolonged work-related stress can seriously harm an employee's mental condition, leading to extreme fatigue (burnout), increased anxiety, mood swings, as well as decreased job satisfaction and the ability to balance work and personal life. Ultimately, these problems can make workers more likely to be absent, leave the company, and feel less dedicated to their jobs. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that organizations need to see work stress as a strategic issue that requires a systemic approach, through balanced work design, policies that support work-life balance, and creating a psychologically healthy work environment. These efforts are expected to help reduce work stress while also boosting employees' psychological well-being in the context of modern organizational management.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so further studies on the topic of Workplace Stress Dynamics and Employee Psychological Well-Being are needed to improve this research and provide more insights for readers and the author.

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