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How to Manage Stress Experienced by Employees When Working from Home Due to the Covid-19 Virus Outbreak

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Abstract

Currently throughout the world covid-19 virus affected or known as the corona. Employees have to work from home to keep themselves productive or at a minimum when still working, they must be equipped with masks, physical distance and hand sanitizer policies to protect themselves. The negative aspect that employees can feel is that they have to adapt to current challenges, especially employees who have a family where they usually do all the work in the office, but now they also have to take care of family and children, the role of ambiguity, role conflict, and continue to carry out its work for an undetermined period. Previous research states that there is uncertainty about coming to work, inadequate equipment, the erratic workload can cause stress for employees. The purpose of this study is to add insight into how to manage stress experienced by employees while working from home amid dangerous conditions, especially now with the outbreak of the covid-19 virus from a review of various existing literature and using qualitative methodologies to support this research. Next, we present the results of our empirical analysis and discuss the implications of our research. We recommend six approaches that employees can take to prevent uncontrolled stress namely communication with family, communication at work, scheduling, safety, while maintaining health, obey government regulations and limit it to see news about the pandemic covid-19 outbreak.

Keywords: Stress; Work from home; Covid-19

1. Introduction

Currently throughout the world covid-19 virus affected or known as the corona. The covid-19 virus was first discovered in China with the spread of this virus can be between humans and is currently developing throughout the world (Kampf, Todt, Pfaender, & Steinmann, 2020). This makes many regions isolated and has an impact on a very drastic decline in the economy (Bayuni, 2020). Employees have to work from home to keep themselves productive and maintain their performance amid the outbreak of the covid-19 virus (Fachriansyah, 2020; Putri, 2020) or at a minimum when still working, they must be equipped with masks, physical distance and hand sanitizer policies to protect themselves so that they can cut off the spread of this virus. (Desk, 2020).

For employees, this can also be seen in several aspects. Positive aspects can be seen that by working in a virtual way they can manage their work flexibly, the existence of work-life balance (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). A survey by the American Information Technology Association even found that 36 percent of respondents would choose to work from home rather than a salary increase. Employees are happy with their work, do not experience traffic jams when going to the office, breathe healthy air and are more satisfied with their personal lives (Lorenz, 2007). However, the negative aspect that employees can feel is that they have to adapt to current challenges, especially employees who have a family where they usually do all the work in the office, but now they also have to take

care of family and children, the role of ambiguity, role conflict, and continue to carry out its work for an undetermined period especially the covid-19 pandemic outbreak (Bahney, 2020; Usman, Ahmed, & Ahmed, 2011). Previous research states that there is uncertainty about coming to work, inadequate equipment, the erratic workload can cause stress for employees (Ereback, 2016).

Stress can be caused due to the overlapping of work and family life. Work is brought home by employees, the inability to forget work at home, lack of support and stability from the family can cause stress to employees (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013). Previous studies found that those who were quarantined would experience emotional disturbances, depression, stress, irregular moods, irritability. The long-term impact of quarantine especially with this covid-19 outbreak is that it can be with avoidance behavior, alcohol abuse, and difficulty adapting to normal life (Hegde, 2020).

The purpose of this study is to add insight into how to manage stress experienced by employees while working from home amid dangerous conditions, especially now with the outbreak of the covid-19 virus from a review of various existing literature and using qualitative methodologies to support this research. Next, we present the results of our empirical analysis and discuss the implications of our research.

2. Literature Review

Stress is an undesirable reaction by individuals that must be faced with heavy pressure, work demands, workloads that affect the physical and mental employee (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013). Job stress is generally defined as a psychologically depressed condition caused by unpleasant physical or psychological experiences (Bimantoro & Noor, 2012). Work stress refers to the pressures or tensions that people feel in life between the external environment and us, which cause emotional and physical stress (Kotteeswari & Sharief, 2014).

Several previous studies mention that with stress an employee will act more than before to work better. However, if the stress is excessive, it will create anxiety, anxiety for employees and the potential to reduce their performance (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013).

There are two approaches to work stress, namely the individual and company approaches (Rivai & Sagala, 2011). For individuals, it is important to approach because work stress can affect life, health, productivity, and income. For companies, not only because of humanitarian reasons but also because they influenced the achievement of all aspects and effectiveness of the company as a whole.

The source of work stress that occurs to employees according to Robbins, can come from 3 factors: environmental factors such as environmental uncertainty affecting changing organizational structures and technological advances, organizational factors in the form of high task demands, and individual factors in the employee's factors (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Family factors can also affect employee stress ranging from no support from family and lack of stability in household life (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013; Dolcos & Daley, 2009). Many reasons cause employee stress due to work, family, excessive work conflict (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013).

3. Methodology ⁵

This research is a systematic review (Systematic Review) using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis) method which is carried out systematically by following the correct stages or research protocols. A systematic review is a research method that aims to evaluate, identify, analyze all previous research results that are related and relevant to a particular topic, particular research, or the latest phenomenon of concern (Perry & Hammond, 2002); (Wolor, Pratama, Aditya, F, & Purwana, 2020). The facts presented are comprehensive and balanced because systematic reviews are used to synthesize relevant research findings. Qualitative systematic review includes the following steps: Formulating research questions, conducting systematic literature review searches, screening and selecting suitable research articles, Conduct analysis and synthesis of qualitative findings, Implement quality control, Prepare a final report (Perry & Hammond, 2002); (Wolor et al., 2020).

A qualitative approach is used to frame, analyze, and provide comprehensive solutions in solving working stress amid the pandemic covid-19 virus (Berkah & Sawarjuwono, 2019). Various scientific articles are taken from specialized journals to help build the most prominent elements in describing work motivation in a dangerous environment, based on several important points explained by different authors (Moreno, Lafuente, Carreón, & Moreno, 2017).

4. Discussion

What should be a concern for employees today amid a covid-19 pandemic is a stress problem where employees cannot work effectively in the office due to government policies to carry out regional quarantine and social distancing. This is compounded by the gathering of families at home as a result of this policy, where on one side employees must work at home and on the other hand some families are also at home playing a part in psychological relations of employees who work daily at the office, currently working at home while gathering with family. The balance between the responsibility to balance work and family responsibilities is very important to do to avoid employee stress especially with the covid-19 virus outbreak where the uncertainty of the covid-19 outbreak and government policies regarding social distancing will soon end (Crosbie & Moore, 2004; Dolcos & Daley, 2009). Uncertainty of going to work amid this outbreak, inadequate equipment, the erratic workload can cause stress for employees (Ereback, 2016). If stress is not controlled and left by employees, it will be a real problem for the company and employees. Too much stress will cause emotional disturbances, work quality, and the life of the employee (Afida, Janipha, Mustapha, & Ismail, 2012). We provide recommendations on several things that can be done to overcome the problems regarding stress experienced by employees while working from home.

First, communication with family. Communicate to families and children about current conditions that must work from home or in shifts to reduce the spread of the covid-19 virus. Maybe some children don't understand this condition and will see their parents who used to work right now in their midst and the time they spend together playing. This can be communicated in a way that can be understood by children, for example, analogous to their favorite films in the face of all this to remain at home so they can survive (Bahney, 2020; Hegde, 2020).

Family support is important in reducing employee stress which can stimulate employee motivation and performance (Sok, Blomme, & Tromp, 2014).

Second, communication at work. Communication at work is equally important where amid the 19th outbreak requires employees to rely on technology in communication. This is good if everything from infrastructure and technology is sufficient. However, it should be noted aspects that can cause stress for employees both in terms of technology that is not yet supported, weak signals, communication between employees due to not meeting directly so they can not know the emotions of the conversation (Jones & Graham, 2015). It is recommended to use virtual communication media, although we cannot physically meet, we are face to face and not just text messages (Morley, Cormican, & Folan, 2015). This is needed to stay connected, feel cared for and keep creating strong associations (Hegde, 2020; Putri, 2020). Previous research shows that working virtually can balance family life and work to reduce employee stress (Raghuram & Wiesenfeld, 2004).

Third, Scheduling. Employees can arrange schedules with other family members, with husbands, wives, and children to be able to continue working and have time to play. Prepare interesting activities while at home so you don't create boredom, boredom, and even stress for employees and an opportunity to be able to spend time with family too (Bahney, 2020; Hegde, 2020). Arranging the schedule for the division of tasks in managing children in husband and wife is also important in maximizing work from home to avoid conflicts within the family that can cause conflict and stress (Jones & Graham, 2015). Avoid working overtime even when working from home, because this will cause conflict at home and can cause stress for employees (Albertsen, Rafnsdóttir, Grimsmo, & Tómas-son, 2008).

Fourth, safety. Safety is very important for employees who are required to work in shifts during the covid-19 pandemic outbreak. Where, companies are required to provide the latest procedures, medical devices, benefits for employees so that they feel safe and comfortable while working (Nea et al., 2017; Syakriah, 2020).

Fifth, maintaining health. During the covid-19 pandemic virus outbreak, it is good for employees to stay healthy so that they can remain productive at work and gather with family especially with the social distance policy (Hegde, 2020). It is necessary to exercise, nutritious food intake, and a supply of vitamins and drugs to maintain fitness (Bhui, Dinos, Galant-miecznikowska, Jongh, & Stansfeld, 2016).

Sixth, obey government rules and limit it to see news about the covid-19 pandemic outbreak. This will make you feel restless, anxious, and will make you stressed out excessively (Hegde, 2020; Putri, 2020). Especially if there is false information, check and refine the news, especially those that are misleading. The more people adhere to policies and regulations that can scientifically combat this covid-19 pandemic, the faster we can get up from this outbreak (Putri, 2020).

5. Conclusion

Amid the covid-19 outbreak situation, it is very vulnerable for employees to experience stress related to working from home. Where working from home requires employees to remain productive, but on the other hand, they must gather, take care of the household and family every day during the quarantine. This will drain employees' energy, mind, and psychology where they are accustomed to working in the office every day, but now they have to work at home. Through this

article, we recommend six approaches that employees can take to prevent uncontrolled stress namely communication with family, communication at work, scheduling, safety. while maintaining health, obey government regulations and limit it to see news about the pandemic covid-19 outbreak.

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Future Research

This research is only based on literature review chosen by the authors from various sources of literature available in helping provide recommendations to employees to manage stress while working from home amid dangerous conditions, especially now with the outbreak of the covid-19 virus. This was taken because the author is currently undergoing a policy from the Indonesian government for self-isolation and working from home. Future research requires a broader method through direct interviews or with quantitative methods to increase the repertoire of knowledge.

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