WFH WLB AND THEIR EFFECTS ON EMPLOYEES’ PERFORMANCE DURING THE PANDEMIC ERA: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit almost all countries, including Indonesia. COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the entire community, especially employees. One of the impacts that occurred was the implementation of Work from Home (WFH), this was done as an effort to reduce the transmission rate of COVID-19. However, the direct effect that occurred was that employees faced several conflicts such as stress, frustration and imbalances in life. On this basis, researchers want to know the role given by work life balance on employee performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The method used in this research is a study of the literature which is based on studies of previous studies that match the criteria for the same research variables. The results obtained in this study are work life balance by applying flexible time, increasing job satisfaction, and also to increase employee self-control which is predicted to improve the performance of employees who apply WFH.

Keywords: Work-life balance, work from home, employee performance

INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a pandemic that has attacked the whole world simultaneously in the past 2 years. COVID-19 is a virus that is derived from Orthocoronaviriane, where the virus can infect birds, mammals and humans. COVID-19 first attacked the city of Wuhan, China in December 2019. In Indonesia, 2 cases of Covid-19 were reported, the first of which occurred on March 2, 2020. As an effort to reduce the number of Covid-19, the government through instructions from the Minister of Home Affairs (INMENDAGRI) 1 of 2021 regarding policies in implementing restrictions on community activities (PPKM).

The PPKM implemented has the effect of limiting activities that occur outside the home, thus requiring all business actors to employ Work From Home (WFH) employees. The Jakarta Workforce and Transmigration Office stated that there were 3,964 companies implementing WFH. In accordance with data obtained from Surabaya.go.id which states that 75% of companies in Surabaya implement WFH until the end of 2021. Therefore, there are many employees during the pandemic, which is done online or by means of WFH, by the company where he works. Employees who implement WFH are expected to be able to maintain their performance during the pandemic.

The policy certainly has an impact on employees because in this situation they have a different performance when compared to Work From Office (WFO), where in this case WFH requires employees to be able to adapt to the new culture in terms of work, while also asking employees to adapt with the new work environment. In an article written by (Singh & Kumar, 2020) it is stated that the work in the office and at home are different and separate things, which
in this case requires time and a special atmosphere. Therefore, employees need to make adjustments to the WDH atmosphere. This change in work patterns has had a significant impact, both positive and negative.

The positive impact felt by employees is based on a survey conducted by the Jakarta Workforce and Transmigration Office which stated that 45.5% felt more productive due to flexible time. Furthermore, according to the results of a survey at the Federation of BUMN Trade Unions, 66% of BUMN employees conducted WFH, as many as 84.3% stated that employees can maintain and also increase their productivity.

Meanwhile, a survey conducted by CNN Jakarta in 2020 stated that 73% of employees prefer to do WFH after the COVID-19 pandemic. This has a different meaning from data from research conducted by Fikri (2020) where he stated that 75% of workers find it difficult to be able to divide their time due to the accumulation of work which in the same case is also a housewife or head of the household, which one is more prioritized.

There are several impacts that can be felt when doing quarantine or WFH, namely excessive worry, frustration, boredom and also the negative stigma that comes when WFH is passed. Meanwhile, the negative impact that is felt is the disruption of productivity on the performance carried out by employees which cannot be done optimally. The performance of employees is a result of work or output obtained individually during work. In addition, performance can also be interpreted as an effort to complete work by individuals.

Basically, performance is a result or a product obtained by employees during their working period. According to Bataineh (2019), the performance of employees can have an impact on many sectors, especially on the performance of individuals and companies. Therefore, companies are expected to be able to pay attention to job satisfaction and also psychological needs, which can be in the form of work life balance and other basic needs (Saina et al., 2016).

In accordance with research conducted by Crosbie and Moore (2004) which states that work life balance can provide satisfaction and also better psychological health for a worker. Another study conducted by Soomro (2018) in which 280 respondents showed that Work From Home has a positive effect on increasing the productivity of the performance provided by employees. While the research conducted by Rafsanjani et al. (Nurani et al., 2019) where the results obtained if WFH has no effect on performance. On the other hand, a survey conducted by McKinsey which was described by Afriyandi (2020) explained that in fact different things, namely WFH can cause a 25% decrease in work productivity. Which is caused by work activities that are carried out all the time without stopping. This causes the ineffectiveness of WFH.

**Work from Home**

Changes at the time the organization has given tasks and responsibilities to employees by encouraging employees to work in the office as well as a prohibition on gathering in the room, causing employees to work at home, this method is currently known as work from home (WFH). At this time WFH is one of the methods used by many companies, this is because it provides many benefits for the sustainability of the company. In Indonesia itself, the implementation of WFH is not a culture that is often done, but during the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, managers are required to do it to maintain employee productivity.

For some informants who have various accesses to distant places of residence, WFH becomes an ideal way to maintain productivity, this is due to reduced costs and time
required. Companies that support work from home claim that this latter opportunity results in greater productivity.

Timbal and Mustabsat mentioned in a study conducted by Farrell (2017), explaining that if there are indicators of work from home, they are as follows.

**Flexible Work Environment**

The flexibility provided by the work environment can provide employees with various opportunities to make independent choices that relate to how, when and where employees are concerned with work-related tasks.

**Stress Disorder**

Disorders that cause stress can be caused by a stimulus that often turns into something heavy and prolonged so that it is difficult for everyone to deal with and also usually arises from life problems and daily distractions.

**Closeness to Family**

The family has an important role for a person to support all forms of activities and activities carried out.

**Travel time**

This indicator is how long it takes to reach a certain distance.

**Health and Work Balance**

The importance of maintaining health and balance for individuals is important and must be considered in order to achieve maximum work results.

**High Creativity and Productivity**

Creativity is needed in order to be able to provide an idea in order to solve various kinds of problems that exist.

**Separating home and office work and self-pressure**

Employees must be able to separate their personal affairs from office matters to avoid loss of professionalism and unexpected pressure.

**Employee Performance**

Performance is a process that is carried out during a further working period, while employee performance is a form of activity carried out by employees related to the goals of the company. Another understanding is the level of achievement of tasks carried out by employees, this is in accordance with research conducted by Robbins (2015) which describes performance as a form of effort made by individuals on their work. This is the same as what was stated by Simamora (2006) which explains that performance is an effort that shows the effort that has been made. Performance is an opinion of Simamora (2006) which states that performance is often defined as an effort that reflects the effort that has been expended. Employee performance is an input and output that is quantitatively measured not only focusing on the results achieved but
also on the process of achieving them (Amstrong, 2006). In addition, Mangkunegara (2004) defines performance as the result of individual work both in quality and quantity in completing tasks in accordance with responsibilities. Surtisno (2005) also states that performance is the limit of success of employees or workers in carrying out work. In addition, performance is also referred to as the results achieved by individuals and groups according to their respective tasks. Performance in general is not only centered on work results, but includes processes that occur during work completed (Sedarmayanti, 2009). The performance according to Rivai and Basri (2005) is defined as the result and level of individual success as a whole within a certain period in completing the task or work assigned by the organization or company.

Dousin et al. (2019) concluded that there are several aspects of employee performance, namely: 1) Ability, because it can affect organizational commitment through two dimensions, namely potential and knowledge. Potential is assessed as an adequate educational qualification for workers in certain positions. Furthermore, knowledge includes the skills and knowledge possessed by workers or employees in doing their jobs. 2) Motivation, which is an encouragement within or outside the worker that arouses enthusiasm to complete the job. The motivation that exists in workers will be able to evoke a behavior with the intention of completing their task or work. 3) Personality, because the performance of each individual is different, this is influenced by personality characteristics including self-esteem, self-concept, and emotional intelligence.

Eviana (2020) explains that one of the most important factors in influencing performance is ability and motivation. In addition, performance in its implementation is influenced by many aspects that can determine the performance of employees or workers. Budihardjo (2011) states that there are six aspects that affect performance, namely: 1) Punctuality, Employees or workers who have good time management skills will have a greater opportunity to complete their tasks on time. The suitability of the time of completion of work is a form of responsibility from his position; 2) Quality of work, which is one important component in the success of doing a job. The quality of work produced by workers is a measure of whether they are capable and agile in the work they handle; 3) Quantity, which is the quantitative amount of output produced in the form of products or services. The quantity produced by workers can also be used as a benchmark which when workers have high output it will help increase the productivity of the organization or company; 4) Effectiveness, where work effectiveness is related to the outputs and inputs available to workers. What is meant is how much the use of resources in increasing the quality of the results of each unit of these resources; 5) Work commitment, where work commitment is a worker's bond with the organization or a form of worker responsibility to the organization or company. Workers who have a high work commitment will complete their work with full responsibility; 6) Independence, which is the level of ability of workers or employees in carrying out work functions in their respective responsibilities. Workers and/or employees who have a high sense of responsibility are indicated to have good abilities in solving problems that exist in their work.

**Work Life Balance**

Work life balance basically has an important function for every employee, it is intended that employees have a balanced quality of life between work and personal life. Hyun et al. (2020) defined work life balance is a balance between an individual’s personal life and work, for example
having more time to relax, having a good relationship with coworkers, and helping to work optimally. Work life balance focuses on a state of balance between the two demands of an individual's work and personal life (Lockwood, 2003). According to Kinman & Jones (2008) so far the efforts that can be done to improve work life balance are giving gifts, facilities at work locations, health insurance for families and easy leave regulations. Work life balance according to Sabilah et al. (2020) is based on 4 main aspects, namely: 1) Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), This aspect is based on the extent to which individual work can interfere with life outside of work or personal life. For example, when individuals work, they have to sacrifice time with their families. 2) Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), this aspect is based on the extent to which an individual's personal life interferes with an individual's work life or is the opposite of work Interference with personal life. For example, individuals or employees have household problems that interfere with their activities and productivity. 3) Personal Life Enhancement of Work (PLEW), This aspect refers to how far an individual's life can increase their productivity in the world of work. This can happen because of a healthy life outside of work so that it can help improve their performance at work. 4) Work Enhancement of Personal Life (WEPL), This aspect emphasizes the extent to which an individual's world of work can improve the quality of life outside of work or an individual's personal life. This can happen, for example, individuals can use their skills in the world of work in their daily lives outside of their jobs.

In addition, there are several factors that can affect the work life balance of employees according to Lumonon (2019), namely: 1) Time, this factor includes the amount of time spent at the work location or the amount of time spent on personal life 2) Plan of activities, This can affect the work life balance if the schedule used to complete work is more than for personal time. 3) Fatigue, this factor is a determining condition which can be said to be a decrease in the capacity of an individual to work and a decrease in work productivity efficiency.

**METHOD**

The method used in the research is literature study or literature study. In conducting a literature study, it is necessary to explicitly define the literature search criteria and inclusion criteria. One of the best ways to conduct a literature study is to briefly describe the main results based on the level of strength of evidence, scope of research, and relevance to the research topic (Agus et al., 2020). Application of literature study is divided into several stages.

**Determine the topic and concentration that will be the focus of research**

Researchers are also required to describe the urgency and novelty of the research topic to be studied. Furthermore, the author can determine the formulation of the problem and the objectives to be achieved.

**Carry out a literature search process using relevant keywords**

Literature can be searched through various sources available electronically and in print. After the literature is collected, the literature selection process is then carried out to facilitate the analysis process.

Writing, which begins by combining points of information from various literatures into a unified whole. The points of information are then described in more depth for further research as
well as to answer practical needs. After that, the next step is to find new evidence-based points that can be the findings of the analysis.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Employees who apply WFH according to Sabilah et al. (2020) have characteristics where in carrying out their work they have a flexible role in addition to acting as employees, they also have to act as parents, children, and have other roles outside of their work. Kinman and Jones (2008) explains that many employees who cannot balance or provide clear boundaries between their personal and work lives will be vulnerable to life conflicts. Therefore, the company has a role in making work life balance policies for employees. Where this policy can have an impact on improving employee performance or performance.

Research conducted by Budihardjo (2011) illustrates that it is important to implement a work life balance, such as flexible working hours, with the intention that employees can carry out other activities such as hobbies and personal needs outside of their work. It is hoped that the implementation of work life balance can improve employee performance and performance.

This is evidenced by the results of research by Bataineh (2019) which of 289 samples stated that the balance between co-workers' relationships, with flexible working hours had a significant impact on increasing employee performance.

In line with research by Dousin (2019) on doctors and nurses in Malaysia who are required to work according to changing schedules. This is considered to lead to higher work conflicts, so that the existence of flexible work schedule arrangements will be able to help improve performance. In addition to flexible time, job satisfaction is considered to improve employee performance.

In research by Rene & Wahyuni (2018) work life balance significantly influences job satisfaction. Which when individual job satisfaction is met, it will affect the increase in employee performance. Based on the opinions of the experts above, it can be concluded that flexible working hours are a way to balance work and personal life, this is in line with the opinion by Eviana (2020) which states that one strategy to achieve work life balance is to have flexible working hours. Soomro et al., (2018) states that employees who do not have a balance between their personal and work lives result in suboptimal productivity and can be bad for the company where the employee works. This is because work life balance determines the amount of time available for employees to fulfill roles in life as a family or as an employee. So, when individuals do not have a balance between the two roles, it will affect the productivity of their performance.

The results of the study Johari et al. (2018) on employees of PT PLN (Persero) showed that the increase in productivity in living their personal and work lives was due to a balance between the two (Work life balance). In addition, the role of work life balance has a positive impact in improving employee performance. In this study, it is shown that the achievement of a balance of personal and work life is achieved if employees do not have complaints and stress due to work.

Supported by research by Mendis and Nurani et al. (2019) that work life balance can provide benefits for employees to reduce stress levels and increase happiness. In contrast to the results of research conducted by Purwanto et al. (2020) conducted at PT. (BRI) Bank Rakyat Indonesia (Persero). In this study, work life balance has no significant effect in increasing the productivity of employee performance. Thus, a company that implements a work life balance will get benefits such as increasing employee productivity, and being able to resolve conflicts so that employee
performance can increase. In addition to the benefits to employees, the company can also receive a positive influence from increasing employee performance.

Work Life Balance can be a balance during this pandemic for employees who do Work From Home. This is because the effort to carry out WLB causes employee saturation to reduce the pressure of work done at home. Things that can be done by employees so that life at home and work at home become balanced is to make a schedule of activities, this is done so that they can focus on the activities to be carried out. In addition, it must be able to create a working space at home, this is done to minimize distractions while working. This is because according to Fisher (2009) explains if Work Life Balance (WLB) is an effort made by a person in order to provide a balance to 2 or more activities.

Graph 1. Relationship between WFH, WLB, and employees' performance

CONCLUSION

Employees who apply WFH have a vulnerability to family conflict, stress and frustration. Therefore, it is necessary to have a balance between personal life and work done at home. WFH employees who have a balance in their personal and work lives will feel satisfaction at work so that it has an impact on increasing performance. It is proven by various studies that employees who have a balance between their personal and work lives (work life balance) have better performance productivity. Work life balance can be applied with time flexibility and individual self-control. Therefore, it is predicted that work life balance can improve the performance of employees who implement WFH.

REFERENCES


