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Work Stress in Employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office

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ABSTRACT

Work stress is an imbalance between the demands and resources owned by individuals; the higher the gap, the higher the stress experienced by individuals. With that, the purpose of this research is to be achieved to find out the factors that cause work stress in employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office. This study explores the factors causing work stress among employees at the Gowa Regency Transportation Office. This research is qualitative; therefore, to achieve the research objectives, data collection techniques are used, namely observation, interviews and documentation. There are 5 informants, namely the head of planning, reporting and finance, the head of public and special transportation, the traffic engineering management coordinator, the personnel manager, and the head of the operational supervision and control section. Based on the results of this study, it shows that work stress in employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office arises because employees are unable to complete their work according to the target, employees lack satisfaction, employees feel less focused in receiving directions or orders, employees lack enthusiasm at work, and there are employees who delay or are lazy at work. Work stress causes employees to experience excessive headaches, sleep disturbances (insomnia), emotional sensitivity, pessimism, and feeling overwhelmed with work; they can lose interest in work and experience a decrease in work performance. The study recommends organizational interventions such as workload adjustment, structured rest periods, effective communication, and employee support programmes to mitigate stress and improve performance.

Keywords: Work stress, employees, workload

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are collaborative entities consisting of individuals who interact to achieve shared goals. Within public institutions, especially those serving the community directly, human resources are pivotal in ensuring organizational effectiveness. One critical challenge in managing human capital is addressing work-related stress (Aulia, Alayyannur, Dwiyanti, Martiana, & Arini, 2021; Chen, Wang, Li, & Liu, 2022; Perry, Carlson, Kacmar, Wan, & Thompson, 2023; Yaunin, Nurdin, Darwin, & Yanwirasti, 2021), which can negatively affect employees' physical health, psychological well-being, and productivity (Galanti, Guidetti, Mazzei, Zappalà, & Toscano, 2021; Muis et al., 2021; Sandoval-Reyes, Idrovo-Carlier, & Duque-Oliva, 2021).

In realizing common goals, it is necessary to pay special attention to the aspect of work stress related to human resources in the organization. Work stress, as a potential obstacle, can affect the performance of individuals or employees, requiring special attention because its impact can include various aspects, both physical, psychological, and behavioral. Risks such as stress, conflict, and other problems that arise at work can affect employee well-being. How an individual assesses events and their ability to deal with the situation will affect the impact that arises. In addition, workload and time factors are also significant triggers for work stress levels, which can result in serious conflicts at the individual employee level.

Work pressure arises when there is an imbalance between job demands and individual resources. The greater the disparity, the higher the level of stress felt (Havermans et al., 2018; Kurniawaty, Ramly, & Ramlawati, 2019; Rasool, Wang, Zhang, & Samma, 2020). It is important to avoid work stress because it can cause problems for yourself, create a negative impact on performance, and affect the quality of life of employees. Stress is defined as the result of an individual's interaction with his or her job duties, including demands and pressures that can affect their performance as well as quality of life. The impact that arises varies depending on the individual's assessment of the events they experience and their ability to deal with the situation.

Stress can have a positive or negative impact. Research experts state that stress that arises as a challenge, especially related to the work environment, has a different mechanism than inhibiting stress, that is, stress that hinders the achievement of goals (Aulia et al., 2021; Dinh, 2020; Perry et al., 2023). Sometimes, in an organizational environment, challenges are deliberately created to increase employee motivation in completing tasks by providing time limits. Therefore, a person must be able to prevent or control the occurrence of work stress. Everyone has a different way of dealing with work stress; employees can reduce stress levels by doing several things. For example, starting the day happy, making a list of work priorities, prioritizing activities based on their importance and urgency, staying away from conflicts, creating comfort in the office, avoiding perfectionism, discussing with superiors, finding out the causes of work stress and overcoming work stress by doing hobbies that they like.

Work stress arises when there is a mismatch between job demands and the resources or capabilities of individuals. Chronic exposure to such imbalances may lead to physical symptoms like headaches and fatigue, as well as emotional consequences such as anxiety and disengagement. In public institutions like the Gowa Regency Transportation Office, where employees handle diverse and often high-pressure tasks, recognizing the roots of stress is essential for sustaining employee well-being and service quality.

Despite its relevance, work stress is frequently underestimated in government settings. This study aims to identify the primary sources of stress experienced by employees at the Gowa Regency Transportation Office and offer practical recommendations for stress mitigation. Using Mangkunegara's framework (2017), this research focuses on four key stress indicators: workload, working time, feedback, and responsibility.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach method with a descriptive approach that tends to use more analysis. Descriptive research involves the use of methods to explain the results of research (Suprianto, 2024). Using a descriptive qualitative research approach, the researcher seeks to collect, describe, and interpret data related to work stress in employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Agency by using indicators according to Mangkunegara (2017), namely (1) workload, (2) working time, (3) feedback, and (4) responsibility.

Checking the validity of the data involves several steps, including (1) extending the observation by ensuring that the data collection is done correctly through the extension of the observation and the re-examination of the previous data. (2) Conduct thorough, detailed, and in-depth research on phenomena during the research process to find relevant factors; the data is double-checked to ensure the accuracy of the information. (3) Using source triangulation by conducting interviews with each informant to test the credibility of data related to work stress in employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office. (4) Conduct member checks to verify the data obtained from data providers so that the correctness of the data can be ensured before processing.

The research data analysis method applied is interactive data analysis, following the Miles and Huberman model. The steps involve (1) data reduction, as a stage of collecting research information; (2) data display, which involves presenting results in the form of a matrix or category list; and (3) conclusion or verification, where further analysis of data reduction is performed to infer information, and the researcher remains open to additional input. Tentative conclusions can be retested by reflection and discussion with peers, as well as triangulation using field data to achieve scientific truth. Member check and triangulation were used to strengthen the validity of the research conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To find out an overview of how work stress is in employees and what are the factors that cause work stress in employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office. Therefore, the researcher processes and presents the data that has been obtained during the research using observation, interview, and documentation techniques presented in descriptive form by adjusting to the grand theory. The theory put forward by Mangkunegara (2019) regarding the causes of work stress is divided into 4, namely workload, work time, feedback, and responsibility. The results of the data analysis obtained during the research process are as follows:

Workload

Workload is a task or work that must be completed by an employee according to his or her part and has a deadline for completion. Workload is one of the factors that cause work stress in employees because if the workload obtained by employees is excessive or exceeds the work capacity of employees, it can cause employees to easily feel tired and feel depressed and ultimately can affect the physical condition of employees so that employees will be easily affected by diseases due to work stress that arises due to excessive workload. It is important for any organization to pay attention to the workload aspect, as its impact can affect employee productivity. From the results of the interview, the researcher concluded that the workload of employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office is still not fully in accordance with their work capacity. There are some employees who feel that they are able to complete their work well and their workload is in accordance with their abilities because it is indeed their job, but there are also those who feel that the workload can reduce the quality of their work. The diversity of employees' work capacities reflects differences in skills and the number of tasks to be completed.

Employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office look busy working with workloads that are not in accordance with their work capacity, social support that is still lacking, getting risks, namely resistance from the community at work, and sudden assignments that must be completed within a certain time. This causes employees to feel stressed because of the many burdens they receive, and they have to complete their work beyond their work capacity. This makes the workload one of the factors that cause work stress for employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office.

The organization must be able to adjust between the workload received by employees and the capacity of employees (Darwis, Arhas, & Prasodjo, 2022; Shi et al., 2023). Based on the results of the analysis, the number of employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office is in accordance with the workload; it's just that there are employees who are lazy or postpone work. From the results of the study, it was also found that work stress in employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office, when viewed from the workload, is still present because there are employees who feel that they have an excessive workload because there are

employees who cannot complete their work according to the predetermined targets, so the lack of satisfaction felt by employees results in a decrease in the quality of employee work; employees feel that the workload received is heavy so that they lack focus on receiving directions or commands; and employees lack enthusiasm in work so that it has an impact on employee performance, which causes work stress for employees.

Unsatisfactory or unsatisfactory work results carried out by an employee can invite complaints, which in turn become a pressure for employees. On the other hand, if the workload is too light, it can lead to boredom due to lack of activity. Boredom at work also has the potential to result in a lack of focus on tasks, which can be a risk to employee performance. Insufficient or excessive workload levels can create stressful situations in the work environment.

Working Hours

Working time is a period of time that has been set by the government for employees to work, both in completing work and when employees come and go. Working time can also be referred to as one of the factors that cause work stress if employees feel that their working hours are no longer effective at work so that they cause employees to be exhausted, while there is a target time given for completing a job that causes a sense of pressure and stress in employees if they cannot achieve the predetermined target.

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, it can be concluded that the working hours of employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Agency are 8 hours. Employee responses related to working hours are an obstacle because they work more than the predetermined time and sometimes have to complete tasks that are delivered suddenly, which causes fatigue and emotions at work because the time that should be used to rest is reduced, but this is a task that employees must carry out. Employees who do not work in the field feel that working hours are enough to rest and complete their work on time, but in contrast to employees who work in the field, there are those who feel that there is a lack of time to rest.

Employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office work for 8 hours, from 07.30 to 16.00 WITA. This is considered effective working hours by some employees who work indoors because employees get long working hours, and the additional work given can also be completed according to the predetermined time, but in contrast to employees who have to work more than the predetermined time, there are those who feel stressed due to erratic working hours.

If viewed from the working time based on the results of the analysis, employees who work for 8 hours are found to consider their working time to be effective, but in contrast to employees who have to work more than the predetermined time and get orders from their superiors, suddenly there are employees who feel that the working time can be an obstacle in completing their work. Employees who consider their working hours effective are employees who work indoors, while employees who feel their working hours are less effective are employees who work outdoors. Employees who feel that working time is an obstacle and stress arises are employees who feel that there is a lack of time to rest while there are work demands that must be completed.

The quality of the work results is greatly influenced by how timely the work is completed. If the work time span is not in line with the demands of the workload, it is likely that the results will not be optimal. When employees are faced with a tough task with a short or sudden deadline, they may experience stress due to the pressures that must be overcome, which can have an impact on their career development within the organization.

Feedback

Feedback provided by leaders or colleagues on employee performance results can be one of the factors that cause work stress if employees feel unsupported in their work environment or feel uncomfortable in their work environment. Good feedback is also able to change the work atmosphere so that it affects employee work productivity.

Based on the results of the direct interviews conducted, it can be concluded that the feedback obtained by the employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office is quite good with a supportive work environment and good colleagues and leaders so that employees feel comfortable at work. This shows that feedback is not a factor that triggers work stress in employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office.

The Gowa Regency Transportation Office has a calm atmosphere and a good environment so that employees can feel good feedback by enjoying a good work environment and atmosphere and have leaders who provide a good example and familiarity for employees at work, which is comfort at work.

The feedback obtained by employees greatly affects employee performance, as the lack of feedback received by employees can be an obstacle and cause work stress for employees (Fuadiyah, Radja, & Harisah, 2023; Labrague, 2021; Stamatis, Puccetti, Charpentier, Heller, & Timpano, 2020). Based on the results of the analysis, the feedback received by employees is very good, and they support each other between colleagues so that a pleasant work environment is created even though there are no rewards at the Gowa Regency Transportation Office. Rewards are an important thing that must exist in an organization to increase employee motivation and encourage better performance, because feedback such as rewards will make employees happier and create a positive workplace.

Employees should get rewards that are in line with their duties and can be used to meet their needs (Niswaty, Tumanan, Arhas, Rifdan, & Akib, 2022). These rewards need to be able to motivate employees to increase their productivity while remaining fair and in accordance with individual responsibilities and workload. For an employee, rewards reflect appreciation from the organization for their contribution to the progress of the organization.

Responsibility

Responsibility is a job that must be completed by each employee according to their respective duties. The responsibility given to employees can be one of the causes of work stress if employees get big responsibilities that exceed the limits of their abilities, such as providing work outside of the employee's ability, so that employees will feel confused and tired of their work, which causes work stress.

The results of the interviews show that employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office can take responsibility for their duties and functions. Good work is needed in working according to their respective portions based on their parts. Even if needed, employees help each other for the part in need. The responsibilities obtained by employees of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office are in accordance with their respective parts. Each employee gets a task according to the part he occupies.

Job pressure arises when the assigned tasks are not in line with the individual's skills. According to the evaluation, the responsibilities given to the staff of the Gowa Regency Transportation Office are in accordance with their expertise, not causing confusion. Employees need to carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively, including completing work according to the predetermined deadline. In addition, maintaining a high quality of work is also important; therefore, it is important for employees to respect each other's applicable rules and policies.

Stress in the workplace can arise or be felt by every worker with a variety of causes and effects. Employee work stress is one thing that is the main object of this research because employees are the main factor in the organisation/company (Haeruddin et al., 2022; Peng, Chen, & Jiang, 2022). Stress conditions are divided into two, namely good and bad stress. Stress both affects the mental and physical condition of employees. Good stress is usually experienced by employees who can use the cause of their stress as motivation and inspiration for themselves to be better in the future. While bad stress has a negative effect on employees who experience it, bad stress is usually experienced by employees who are unable to overcome the causes of the stress experienced so that negative effects can affect the mental and physical condition of employees. Therefore, organisations are expected to pay more attention to the stress condition of employees, whether the stress experienced is good stress or bad stress, so that the organization can know and prevent stress, especially bad stress.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that work stress among employees at the Gowa Regency Transportation Office is caused by excessive workloads, inconsistent working hours, insufficient recognition, and occasional misalignment between responsibility and capacity. Though some employees manage stress constructively, many experience negative physical and emotional symptoms that may undermine institutional performance if unaddressed. Therefore, the institution is urged to: (1) realign workload with employee capacity, (2) enforce predictable and fair working hours, (3) institutionalize feedback and reward mechanisms, and (4) offer training or counseling services. Future research should involve a broader range of informants and consider quantitative validation to generalize findings.

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