



EXPLORATION STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON EMPLOYEES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: The emergence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that has occurred has had an impact on people's lives and has even changed the world economic order, one of which is the current industrial situation. The purpose of this study was to find out how the description of organizational support for employees' welfare during the COVID-19 pandemic changed. The method used is qualitative research with an exploratory type. In this study, there are 10 respondents to be interviewed by researchers who work for the company. Focus Group Discussion is done by making a list of questions as a basis for collecting data. The results of the study show that organizational support during the pandemic is implementing health protocols, supervisor support, changing policies on how to work, and handling the organization for employees infected with COVID-19. The support provides positive emotions for employees, such as feeling safe and grateful. This allows employees to stay productive at work during the pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic; Employee; Organizational Support

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, there was a phenomenon of the spread of the coronavirus that was endemic in the city of Wuhan and was increasingly spreading to almost all parts of the world. The coronavirus is called COVID-19. The COVID-19 virus is most contagious when people who have it have symptoms, although spread can occur before symptoms appear. The rate of spread of COVID-19 is very fast, even the WHO has designated COVID-19 as a global pandemic.

The emergence of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), which occurred suddenly at the beginning of this year, has had a very large impact on people's lives and has even changed the order of the world economy. This condition has not only disrupted the economy but has also disrupted economic movement (Bappenas RI, 2020). One of them is a company that has been affected by this pandemic. There is data at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 based on the results of a survey by the Ministry of Manpower that showed around 88 percent of companies affected by the pandemic during the last six months were generally in a state of loss (Kemnaker, 2020). Then it was stated that 9 out of 10 companies in Indonesia were directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Kemnaker, 2020).

This makes the government make efforts by implementing several policy changes, such as health protocols and ways of working offline online that aim to suppress the spread of the virus. Then it is hoped that it will be able to restore the economy in Indonesia, one of which is for companies to be able to carry out their activities as before the COVID-19 outbreak. One way to support government policies is that companies can implement policies such as health protocols that need to be obeyed, wear masks, and take precautions.

The presence of a pandemic has made most organizations face changes such as working arrangements from the office to working from home, making it necessary to use online communication (Lee, 2021). Then, working from home has helped employees continue their work and organizations resume operations as imposed by the government, but people stay safe during difficult times (Kou, 2012). This is a form of

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support from the organization because they feel safe at work, which is an emotional resource (Lee, 2021). Employees need to feel safe at work and be able to take care of their overall health and perform well for the company, which is a form of organizational support (Aldamman et al., 2019).

The role of the organization for employees is as a provider of socio-emotional resources, such as respect, care, and tangible benefits (salaries and medical or health facilities) (Krishnan, 2016). When employees are considered important by their organization, it will help meet employee needs for approval, confidence, and affiliation (Krishnan, 2016). Positive ratings from the organization toward employees indicate that the increased work effort of employees will be recognized and appreciated by the organization (Krishnan, 2016). This makes employees feel a sense of interest in their organization (Krishnan, 2016). Then it can improve performance at work and can even have an extra role at work, as well as beneficial actions for the organization that goes beyond the assigned tasks (Kurtessis et al., 2017). In addition, support from the organization can have an impact on the psychological and physical health of employees (Arnold & Dupré, 2012).

Research on organizational support is common in companies during normal times, and perceived organizational support during a pandemic can be different (Zhou et al., 2021). There is research on organizational support working as television presenters from Spain (64%), Latin (12%), and Asian (3%) shows that being a member of the organization and access to counseling services are perceived positively by employees during the pandemic (Nee & Chacón, 2021). Then for health workers in Wuhan, there are results of research on organizational support that occurred during a pandemic, such as hospitals must provide adequate protective equipment and training to reduce the risk of infection, provide standardized protocols and leaders to improve communication with employees, and foster a climate of mutual trust (Zhou et al., 2021). Then there are the results of research on organizational support for employees in Vietnam during the pandemic period, showing that support from supervisors plays an important role as a form of support from the organization (Kou, 2012). This is due to the work culture in Asia where lower staff tend to follow instructions and support from managers (Kou, 2012). In addition, the duration of the pandemic can change perceptions about organizational support so that there may be a perception of organizational support increasing or decreasing based on management performance as the pandemic continues (Hoak, 2021).

Based on the explanation above, the pandemic has an impact on organizational support and subjective well-being during the pandemic. This makes researchers interested in examining how to get a deeper picture of employee organizational support during the COVID-19 outbreak.

METHODS

In this study, the participants in the study were 10 employees of one of the SOE subsidiaries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The method of selecting participants was based on a simple random sampling method. Simple random sampling means that every unit of analysis in the population has an equal chance of being selected into the sample (Lohr, 2019). Before conducting the interview, the researcher explained in advance the purpose of the study, the duration and procedures during the study, the benefits of the study, and the guarantee of the confidentiality of participant data. After that, participants were given informed consent so that they could conduct interviews as data collection.



The data collection method will use focus group discussions as synonyms with interviews, especially semi-structured and group interviews (Nyumba et al., 2018). *Focus Group Discussion* emerged as a qualitative data collection approach and bridging strategy for scientific research (Nyumba et al., 2018). Interview to be able to understand the phenomenon in more depth. Interviews in qualitative research are conversations that have a purpose and are preceded by some informal questions.

In this study, researchers used semi-structured interviews. Before conducting the data collection, the researcher made a kind of guideline for the interview so that it remained focused according to the discussion of the theme raised but still seemed relaxed enough that the respondents wanted to talk more comfortably.

Table 1. Interview Guideline Questions

No.	Question
1	What are the things that hinder you from working during a pandemic?
2	How do you feel when you work during a pandemic?
3	What are the things that you feel when there are changes in the company during the pandemic?
4	Are there any facilities provided by the company during a pandemic?
5.	What does the company do when an employee is confirmed positive?

Source: data that has been processed by the author (2021)

Data analysis and interpretation are the most critical parts of qualitative research. This is considered the most appropriate for any research that seeks to explore multiple interpretations (Alhojailan, 2012). In thematic analysis, "all possible interpretations are possible" (Alhojailan, 2012). The reason for choosing thematic analysis is that "the central process involved in thematic analysis is transcription, the analytical effort to identify themes" (Howwit & Cramer, 2016). This means that the analysis presented in the thematic analysis consists of categories or themes that describe significant features of the data. The steps that must be taken are: transcribing the data, then starting to use the initial code generation and identifying them as themes, and sub-themes, and finally writing reports (Howwit & Cramer, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, researchers had 10 respondents be employees of PT. X, a company in Bandung that has 1 department head, 1 section head, and 8 staff who have worked in the company for at least 1 year. Researchers will explain in more detail and depth the description of organizational support for workers during the COVID-19 pandemic with a theme that describes organizational support for workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of these themes will be explained more deeply and systematically with the results of the coding that has been carried out by the researchers seen in Table 2 below:



Table 2. Themes and Sub-Themes of Organizational Support

Theme	Sub-Theme
Implementation of the Health Protocol	
Boss Support	Responsive to employees Listening to employees
Work Policy	Change the way of working Provision of work desk distance
Handling of employees affected by COVID	Self-Isolation PCR has been borne by the company Workload Wages

Source: data that has been processed by the author (2021)

Health Protocol

The health protocol is a series of rules that regulate the safety of activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Health protocols that are regulated are wearing masks, cleaning hands regularly with soap and running water or using hand sanitizer, maintaining a minimum distance of 1 meter from other people, and consuming a balanced diet (Handayani et al., 2020).

Table 3. Excerpts of Health Protocols

Theme	Quote
Health Protocol	<p><i>"The task force distributes anti-bacterial masks, bottled hand sanitizer, and vitamins to all employees. So, when employees enter the office in the morning, the security guard will distribute vitamins as well as check the temperature. Fogging once a month too. In the office, masks and refills of hand sanitizers are also available, as well as portable hand washing at 2 points, namely in the parking lot and when you want to enter the office."</i> (Source Person 2)</p> <p><i>"For project employees, the Task Force also sends masks and hand sanitizer to the project site, and there is fogging for mess and mass PCR for all employees at the project site (because the PPK / project supervisor from the client turned out to be positive"</i> (Source Person 4)</p> <p><i>"When WFO is 50%, the infection is even smaller when WFO is 25%. Yes, when the WFO situation is more under control"</i> (Source Person 6)</p> <p><i>"Currently, we have 100% WFO because WFH is because there is a distance between us and our work area, which is still sufficient, to increase the effectiveness of the work of the BOD. In addition, it has been vaccinated for 100%"</i> (Resource 7)</p>

Source: data that has been processed by the author (2021)

Boss Support

Superior support is a feeling where employees feel that their superiors care about their welfare by listening to their subordinates' opinions and being responsive to employees when facing problems. Responsiveness to the employee in question can immediately respond to employees when facing problems, even outside of working hours. Listening to the opinions of subordinates, as subordinates give opinions and superiors want to pay attention to them.

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Table 4. Organizational Support Quotations

Subtheme	Quote
Responsive to employees	<i>"Yes, sometimes my job is to make sure the project runs safely. Well, sometimes I like to have business in the middle of the night, fortunately, my boss is very welcome to say "If you want to WA at any time, please, if I haven't slept, I'll reply" (Resource 7)</i>
Listening to subordinates	<i>"The policy change, which was originally a morning and afternoon shift, then changed to 1 day WFH and 1-day WFO is because employees who are WFO in the morning usually stay in the office until the afternoon, so meet with employees who are indeed WFO in the afternoon. Because the Task Force was worried and listened to the opinions of employees as well, the policy was changed to 1 day WFH and 1-day WFO (to minimize transportation costs as well)" (Source Person 3)</i> <i>"Yes, yesterday I was exposed to COVID-19, right, you know how it feels. I try to give ideas to my superiors for sharing sessions so that other employees know what to do. Alhamdulillah, the boss agreed and just yesterday I became a resource person for the sharing session"</i>

Source: data that has been processed by the author (2021)

Work Policy

A work policy is a series of concepts and principles that become the outline and basis of the plan for the implementation of a worker. During the pandemic, there was a change in work policies following the regulations set by the government. Changes in the way of working in question are ways of working from the office offline, working from home online, and shifts in.

Table 5. Quotation of Employment Policy

Subtheme	Quote
Change the way of working	<i>"Hmm.. so far, ma'am, when there is a pandemic, automatically meeting with customers becomes limited, so now we need to just use online tools like zoom. It's just that if it's not possible and we have to go out of town, we coordinate and stay there just like we have to comply with health protocols, but even if it's a bit complicated, you need to go through it, like having to do a rapid test." (Resource 2)</i> <i>"The work design currently being used is 25% WFO in a day (15 people), the rest is WFH. Now, H-1, each superior must report to the PIC of the Task Force regarding which of his subordinates will come to the office the next day. This list of names is then sent by QHSE to the security guard, so if there are employees who are not listed on the list, they will be immediately expelled by the security guard. If there are employees outside the list who want to take documents to the office urgently, then the security guard will write their names and will also monitor them in the office when the employee picks up the documents (maximum 1 hour) if it's been 1 hour, then the security guards will send them out."</i>

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Table spacing	<p>(Source Person 3) <i>"When there is a pandemic, there are more limitations. You can communicate online, but it's better to be in person. Not to mention when there are jobs outside the city"</i> (Source 10) <i>"Since the pandemic, working hours have become very irregular, not knowing the time, even on Saturday and Sunday, some are still working. Usually, if the project is a meeting once a month, when the new project meeting starts at 8 pm until 11 pm, the employees also get tired/downhearted"</i> (Resource 5) <i>"Yeah.. when you work, WFH is more productive... because you can focus more on work, while when you work at the office, you get cut off and close together."</i> (Source Person 4) <i>"Yes, having WFH has its advantages, Ms. Is it possible to record the results of the meeting, Ms. So if something goes wrong, you can playback the recording of the meeting.."</i> (Source Person 3) <i>"At the beginning, it was full work from home, almost 2 full months at home. Activities at home seemed to be disturbed by work coordination. Yes, so when internal discussions have to use zoom. After 2 months of working the morning and afternoon shifts, there's a bit of leeway for fun. So there are activities because we can't do all of WFH. With the shift, it can be easier to work on documents and coordinate better. Even though coordinating with customers is still a bit difficult."</i> (Source Person 6) <i>"Currently, we have 100% WFO because WFH is because there is a distance between us and our work area is still sufficient, to increase the effectiveness of the work of the BOD. In addition, it has been vaccinated for 100%"</i> (Resource 7)</p>
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Source: data that has been processed by the author (2021)

Handling employees affected by COVID-19

Handling employees affected by COVID-19 is the company's process of handling employees affected by COVID-19. First, self-isolation is when people infected with COVID-19 are isolated so they don't infect others. Second, PCR is carried out by the company, which is a facility from the office to check for the COVID-19 virus by detecting viral DNA. Third, the workload is the number of activities that must be completed by employees within the specified time.

Table 6. Quotations for handling employees affected by COVID-19

Subtheme	Quote
Self-Isolation	<i>"Oh yes, Ma'am, we are now being asked to do a rapid test, right, Ma'am. Well, thank God it was paid by the company. When we are confirmed with COVID, the company tries to help too, madam, if we want self-isolation"</i> (Source 10)
PCR has been borne by the company	<i>"If there are positive employees, the self-isolation is for 14 days. if it's been 14 days, the PCR is done again, if it's still positive then self-isolate again for 10 days, but if the results are negative then the public health center must issue a COVID-free certificate,</i>

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then repeat the PCR to make sure that it's negative, and after that, you can go to the office. But if, for example, there is a COVID-free certificate, but it turns out that when the PCR is done again, it turns out to be positive, then self-isolation is carried out again for 10-14 days, and then the PCR is done again. All of this is financed by the company." (Informant 8)

Workload

"Employees who get positive if their work is very urgent, even though they are self-isolated, are still WFH but their work portion is reduced (regulated/managed individually). But if the work is not urgent and can be backed up by co-workers, the company is free to decide whether he wants to WFH with a reduced portion of work or wants to fully self-isolate. The most important thing is that the employee enjoys it and is not stressed."(Source Person 6)

Wages

"Oh yes, since December, the salary has started to be full again. Yes, it's pretty good amid a pandemic like this, you can still get a full salary, madam, and the salary that has been delayed has been paid too. It's really helpful during a pandemic like this, you can still get a salary and it's all difficult." (Informant 8)

"In the beginning, it was delayed, but for now, the salary has started to be full again. Yes, it's quite helpful when it's like this. Indeed, there is no credit money. But we're often at home, we still have money for transportation."

"Employees who get positive are also still being paid because they are considered WFH." (Informant 9)

Source: data that has been processed by the author (2021)

This study aims to determine the description of organizational support during the covid pandemic. Organizational support during a pandemic can be different from organizational support during normal times (Zhou et al., 2021). This makes researchers try to conduct interviews with several employees who work for the company. From the results of the interview, there is a description of some of the support provided by the company to its employees during the pandemic. Then the researcher will explain in more detail and depth the description of organizational support for workers during the Covid-19 pandemic with a theme that describes organizational support for workers during the Covid-19 pandemic. Four themes are described as organizational support during a pandemic, namely the application of health protocols, work policies, support from superiors, and handling affected by covid.

The implementation of this health protocol aims to increase efforts to prevent and control COVID-19 to prevent the occurrence of new epicenters/clusters during the pandemic (Handayani et al., 2020). This also means the company has also implemented a health protocol for its employees. The company gradually started working in the office, with the company implementing a health protocol by providing masks, hand sanitizer, and vitamins to employees. In addition, employees who enter the office need to report first to the task force team so that it can be recorded and make it easier for the task force to track if there are positive employees from the office. After all, employees were vaccinated, and the company rearranged the distance between employees' desks. The company has policies in place that require all employees to work for the company. This is done by the company to prevent employees from being infected. This support has made the number of cases affected by COVID-19 in the company continue to decline. The decrease in cases shows that the health of



employees is also good. This allows employees to continue to be productive at work while still implementing health protocols.

Changes in company policies are something that employees currently feel during a pandemic. Working conditions, such as time pressure and sudden changes, affect employee welfare (Lee, 2021). At the beginning of the pandemic, there was a policy to work from home, then change to shifts at work, and now all employees are working in the office. This change follows government regulations and the results of the evaluation and spread of the COVID-19 virus in the company. At the beginning of working at home, employees felt limited in their work, especially in coordinating with their co-workers, because they felt more comfortable meeting in person. Sometimes employees need to work outside working hours for online meetings. However, some employees find it helpful when there is a work at home policy, such as feeling more productive because they are not too distracted at work and can listen to meeting results via the zoom application. This is felt to help employees at work (Lee, 2021).

During a pandemic, superiors are still willing to help employees, such as replying to messages from employees if they experience obstacles outside of working hours. Because when working during a pandemic, it often exceeds working hours. Superiors still want to listen to employee opinions, such as the 1-day WFH and 1-day WFO work procedures and can minimize transportation costs. In addition, superiors also approved the employee's opinion to hold sharing sessions with employees who have been infected with COVID-19 so that other employees, when exposed to it could not panic too much and be more aware of how to maintain their health. When superiors pay attention to employees by working flexibly, and paying attention to employee health and safety, it can be said that employees are in a positive emotional state (Lee, 2021). Emotional reactions arise from employees' perceptions of organizational support (Lee, 2021). When employees feel supported by the organization, it contributes to overall employee satisfaction by meeting their socio-emotional needs, increasing expectations of performance rewards, and being willing to assist when needed (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

During the pandemic, several employees were infected with the COVID-19 virus. However, there are several facilities provided by the company to employees, such as helping the self-isolation and performing PCR which is borne by the company, employees are still given a salary. Employees affected by COVID-19 are not given a high workload. This is done so that employees do not feel stressed at work and can recover quickly from covid. When employees feel lower stress, it is a form of organizational support felt by employees (Aldamman et al., 2019). Organizational support that feels means that employees feel safe at work to maintain their health and perform well for the company (Aldamman et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, organizational support during a pandemic is based on the data obtained, four themes are described as organizational support during a pandemic, namely the implementation of health protocols, work policies, support from superiors, and handling of COVID-19. Organizational support provided to employees during a pandemic meets socio-emotional needs. This allows employees to remain productive at work during a pandemic, such as being more optimistic at work and working according to a predetermined schedule.

The limitation of this research is that it was only conducted in one subsidiary, which could be different from other companies. It is recommended to be able to add



samples in several companies so that they can better describe the support organization to employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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