Chapter 3

Job Satisfaction and Work Productivity During the COVID–19 Pandemic:
Involuntary Work From Home of Higher Education in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the nature of work. Involuntary work from home (IWFH), another form of telework, is increasingly promoted in sectors as a means to ensure continuity of operations in an emergency situation like a pandemic. This study includes the exploration of the relationship between involuntary work from home, communication functions, work-life balance, and its effect on work productivity and employee job satisfaction during this COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in the work situation of 100 employees at the higher educational institutions in Indonesia. The collected data of questionnaires were processed using the SEM method using the SmartPLS program. This study finds some critical factors shaping the experiences and outcomes of IWFH in pandemic situations. The success of work management depends on the communication function between employees to job satisfaction for work productivity.

INTRODUCTION

The corona virus outbreak (COVID-19) has threatened the health of the entire world community. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 is now officially categorized as a pandemic whose spread is getting faster. In addition, this pandemic also occurs not only targeting one region or country but also simultaneously (Sebayang, 2020). Pandemic can literally be defined as a virus with a scale of disease spread that occurs globally throughout the world and has a higher level than the epidemic (WHO, 2020). In this situation, WHO is warning all countries in the world to increase preparedness in preventing and managing the pandemic. This of course requires the state to make policies especially for all sectors. This policy aims to limit all activities both economically, socially, educationally, and everything that requires an interaction to break the chain of spread of this virus. One visible impact is the company. Companies are required to carry out involuntary work from home (IWFH) which means that all employees work at home. This of course triggered forcibly so that the company can adjust this situation as quickly as possible with an adequate digital platform. For many small companies and organizations, the situation tends to be very different, remote work may be limited to e-mail and other non-operational systems (Felstead and Henseke, 2017). Breaking organizations down into individuals who work at home with different requirements and meeting the needs of each individual is not a simple approach, but may be important, regarding the urgency in some cases, especially in Covid19 crisis situation.

In a crisis situation, clear policies are urgently needed for formal regulation of involuntary work from home (IWFH) institutionalized by the government, so that the expectations of work become clear in an uncertain disaster situation (Golden and Pyora, 2011). This illustrates a situation that changes forcefully, where and how people work in a pandemic raises significant employment problems. Particularly, being able to eliminate the voluntary nature of work because it requires employees to work from home in a disaster situation to change a working condition. As in the midst of the outbreak of Covid-19, many companies in Indonesia have begun to implement work from home (WFH) policies. The current work from home is a follow-up in Indonesia to minimize the spread of Covid-19, people are asked to work, study and worship from home, one of which is to create a system of working from home. This appeal, in particular having a serious impact on the national education situation, has been followed up by the Minister of Education and Culture in efforts to prevent Covid-19 in the educational environment. Literally, learning activities can work at home/residence, but it is ensured that all office operational management activities are also carried out online. In particular for higher education, the prohibition applies to all face-to-face activities where many participants have to be postponed or canceled. In the case of higher education institutions, internal compliance is needed suddenly in forming a unit that is tasked with monitoring the implementation of internal control in each of its duties and functions. In the event of an unusual policy like work from home, of course, a certain strategy is needed in terms of monitoring the implementation of control over the implementation of organizational duties and functions in education, especially higher education institutions, namely universities. Involuntary work from home which is fully carried out, does occur simultaneously in educational institutions, especially universities which have employees who are forced to work from home to run remote working. Particularly in the situation of organizations in higher education institutions, the enactment of this matter is regulated by the Minister of Education Circular Letter No.19/Year 2020 concerning the adjustment of the work system of the state civil apparatus in an effort to prevent the spread of Covid19 in the environment of government agencies. Data from the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia (2020) reports that about 1104 public and private institutions (as of March 19, 2020) have eliminated activities in the education unit. This said that if students study

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