



Mediation Role of Workplace Spirituality on Work Stress and Employee Mental Well-being: A Study on health workers

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates Work Stress's direct and indirect effects on Employee Mental well-being. This study uses quantitative analysis from an online questionnaire of up to 127 respondents as a research tool. The sampling technique used was the purposive sampling technique. After the data is collected, the reliability of the data is tested using validity and reliability tests. In addition, hypothesis testing using SEM-PLS. The results showed that Work Stress could reduce Employee Mental Well-being. Also, simultaneously, Workplace Spirituality can affect Employee Mental Well-being. In addition, the role of Spirituality in the Workplace as a Moderator between Work Stress and Employee Mental Health.

1. Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends quarantine and isolation measures to limit the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic as part of a broader public health response effort. This rule involves restricting movement and monitoring symptoms, and preventing spread. The psychological impact of lockdowns and quarantines impacts the wider community. The effects include fear of illness or death, helplessness, increased self-blame, depression, and anxiety (Brooks et al., 2020). Infectious epidemics are known to have a significant impact on health workers. They have a high risk of physical and psychological harm. Anxiety and depressive symptoms have been reported in healthcare workers during severe acute respiratory distress. Work stress is an adverse physical or emotional response that occurs when job requirements do not match employees' abilities, resources, and needs (Zhao & Zhou, 2021). According to a recent study, more than half of all employees experience severe stress, and two-thirds have difficulty focusing on their work due to stress (Lin & Ling, 2018).

Job stress is a serious challenge to the labour market, as it causes poor health and working conditions (Peterson, 2018). Job stress greatly affects their well-being, productivity, and work results (Jungwee, 2007). Nurses in hospitals often receive conflicting demands from managers and patients. They are also required to be able to complete managerial tasks simultaneously (Rantanen et al., 2007) & (Kirchhoff & Karlsson, 2019). This condition gives nurses a dual role (Levinson et al., 1965). Therefore the situation leads to role conflict. Role conflict is a typical source of stress for nurses.

Employees' mental well-being is very important and the main responsibility of all organisations (Sharma & Kumra, 2020). Something is interesting in the concept of mental well-being because there are many benefits for the organisation or, specifically, for employees (Burford et al., 2017). Improving mental well-being makes employees more precise in making decisions, in addition to making them productive as well as resilient. Employee mental well-being enables employees to manage uncertainty and change it. Ultimately, organisational goals will be achieved (Hillier et al., 2005). Today's increasingly complex business world and dynamic environment require entrepreneurs or organisation owners to ensure this employee's mental well-being proactively. Research has proven that people suffering from mental health problems account for 13% of the world's population (Black et al., 2020) & (James et al., 2018). Thus, researchers are interested in understanding the antecedents of mental health and employee well-being (Spell & Arnold, 2007). In this background, this research focuses on the mediating effect of workplace spirituality from work stress on employee mental well-being.

2. Literature Review

Work Stress

Stress is a negative individual response that causes various complex personal, emotional, and behavioural problems. (Bunk & Magley, 2013). Stress, especially at work, produces signs of tension such as physical and mental fatigue, and when symptoms worsen to chronic stress, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, sleep disturbances, anorexia, muscle stiffness, etc., can lead to other conditions of (Sobngwi et al., 2004). In addition, stress can exacerbate mental health problems and cause mental illnesses such as depression (Moudon, 2009). When employees are exposed to stress, direct damage to the company can occur. The research argues that job stress can reduce satisfaction and increase turnover intention (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). A study explains that stress hurts work attitudes (S. S. Kim et al., 2015). While other studies explain that work stress hurts overall work performance (Nielsen et al., 2016). Thus, job stress can be said to be a negative factor that is detrimental and causes physical and mental damage to employees and directly affects the company's or organisation's performance.

Employee Mental Well-being

Mental well-being or positive mental health is a basic need for individuals and society. Achieving mental well-being is now a top priority globally and is featured as one of the United Nations' sustainable goals (Kotera, Van Laethem et al., 2020). Mental well-being has an impact on mutually beneficial and long-lasting relationships between individuals. Mental well-being is an indication of a person's ability to solve problems. Mental well-being describes a positive state of thinking, feeling, and behaving (Solin et al., 2019). Research reports on the complexities of mental well-being by highlighting two different perspectives: hedonic and eudaimonic (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The hedonic perspective emphasises life satisfaction and the subjective experience of happiness, while the eudaimonic perspective discusses self-realisation and psychological functioning. The level of mental well-being in various countries depends on their culture. For example, a study found that Westerners have higher mental well-being than Asians (Neff et al., 2005).

Furthermore, according to academics, Employee Mental Well-being is the state of a healthy person. Health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being and not only freedom from disease (Tinetti & Fried, 2004). Most practitioners identify health as a positive relationship between physical, mental and spiritual; thus, health is divided into two, physical and mental (Kumar & Kumar, 2014).

Spirituality Workplace

Workplace spirituality is important in leadership and human resource literature and increasing employee and organisational effectiveness (Farmer et al., 2019). Workplace spirituality is different from religiosity because there is no religious belief in it, and it is based on humanistic values, such as the relationship between individuals and other people in the Workplace (Ananthram & Chan, 2016). Fostering workplace spirituality in organisations can create harmony and happiness in the Workplace, and the goal is to increase productivity and reduce the risk of employee conflict (Rahman et al., 2019; Salim et al., 2020). Workplace spirituality encourages employees' desire to do meaningful work in an organisational context (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2020).

Work Stress and Employee Mental Well-being

The most studied causes of workplace stress are lack of organisational support, excessive workload, and non-standard working hours (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). According to previous research, high expectations, lack of proper rest, and unrealistic deadlines cause work-related stress, and it was found that each individual has a different level of stress (Shimazu & Kosugi, 2003). Empirical evidence shows that stress at work harms the physical health of employees. Excessive stress causes fatigue and ultimately leads to losses for the organisation. A study investigating the relationship between perceived work stress, work pressure, and job threats to employee well-being found that work stress will lead to low employee mental well-being, which affects personal life and affects well-being in the long term (Bell et al., 2012).

A study also found that high-stress workplaces will reduce mental well-being (Khan & Khurshid, 2017). Researchers also recommend that organisational, family, and social support are very important in reducing stress on employee welfare. In the end, this research proposes a hypothesis to be tested.

H1: Work stress has an impact on employee well-being

Workplace Spirituality as a Mediator

Workplace spirituality is not just about religion or converting people to a certain belief system. It may be related to any religious belief but not an attitude of personal values and philosophy. Furthermore, research has found that workplace spirituality can mediate work stress on mental well-being (Kumar & Kumar, 2014). This study focuses on how workplace spirituality is a mediating variable of work stress on mental well-being. Previous studies have shown a negative relationship between workplace spirituality and work stress (Csiernik et al., 2008).

Many studies show that workplace spirituality better predicts mental well-being and reduces stress (Calicchia & Graham, 2006). Several studies have also suggested that individual Spirituality may moderately affect work stress and social well-being (Hong, 2008; Jiang, 2017; Y. Kim & Seidlitz, 2002). If the person's mental health is good, it means that their health is also in a better state because health is correlated with their well-being. Based on the empirical arguments above, a hypothesis is proposed to be tested.

H2: workplace spirituality will mediate the relationship between work stress and mental well-being

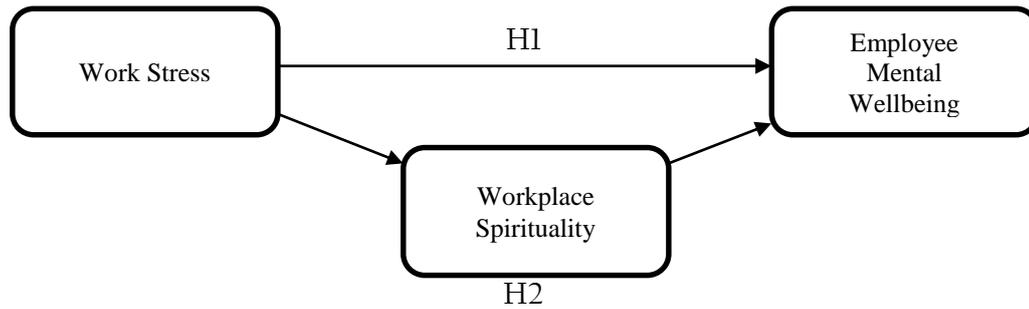


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. Research Method

This study uses an explanatory research method, with the population being health workers in Indonesia. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling, with 127 respondents filling out the questionnaire. Next, the data collection technique is distributing online questionnaires to health workers. The data analysis technique used Partial Least Square (PLS). All variables use a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.1 Measurement

Work Stress Researchers measure Work Stress using a three-item measurement scale adopted from psychological stress developed by (Lemyre & Tessier, 2003); this item has been validated and used in previous studies (Sharma & Gedeon, 2012; Mansour and Tremblay, 2016, 2018). The researcher included several examples of question items used to measure work stress, namely "I feel preoccupied, tormented, or worried." Another example is, "I feel confused; my thoughts are muddled; I lack concentration; I cannot focus."

Workplace Spirituality To measure the Workplace Spirituality variable, using ten items proposed by (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009), this item has also been used and validated in previous research (Goel & Seth, 2022; Ma'arof, n.d.; Mahipalan, 2022). For example, the researcher uses the item, "The work I do is connected to what I think is important in my life" Another example is ", I experience a real sense of trust and personal connection with my coworkers."

Employee Mental Well-being Researchers used the Short Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS) to perform the measurements proposed by (Stewart-Brown & Janmohamed, 2008) and have been used to measure in previous studies (Adler & Seligman, 2016; Galante et al., 2018; Gilchrist et al., 2015). This measurement involves three main items: "I feel optimistic about the future" and "I feel useful."

4. Result

4.1 Validity Test

Table 1. Validity Test

| Variable | Cross Loading | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) | Description |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Work Stress (X) | X1 0,722 | 0,540 | Valid |
| | X2 0,714 | | |
| | X3 0,767 | | |
| Employee Mental Well-being (Y) | Y1 0,722 | 0,579 | Valid |
| | Y2 0,764 | | |
| | Y3 0,795 | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| Workplace Spirituality (Z) | Z1 | 0,825 | 0,676 | Valid |
| | Z2 | 0,819 | | |
| | Z3 | 0,780 | | |
| | Z4 | 0,840 | | |
| | Z5 | 0,722 | | |
| | Z6 | 0,929 | | |
| | Z7 | 0,747 | | |
| | Z8 | 0,875 | | |
| | Z9 | 0,801 | | |
| | Z10 | 0,883 | | |

Source: Data Processed (2022)

In testing the validity, table 1 shows that the items used in the Work Stress, Employee Mental Well-being and Workplace Spirituality variables have a loading factor value greater than 0.70. Furthermore, it can be seen in the AVE value, which shows that it is already above 0.50. So it can be concluded that all items used in this study are valid.

4.2 Reliability Test

Furthermore, the reliability test is carried out, which in detail can be seen in Table 2, which shows that each variable has a Cronbach's alpha value and composite reliability greater than 0.70. So it can be concluded that the items used were reliable in this study.

Table 2. Reliability Test

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | Description |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Work Stress (X) | 0,577 | 0,779 | Reliable |
| Employee Mental Well-being (Y) | 0,636 | 0,805 | Reliable |
| Workplace Spirituality (Z) | 0,520 | 0,806 | Reliable |

Source: Data Processed (2022)

4.2 Direct Effect

Table 3. Direct Effect

| Hypothesis | Original Sample | T-Statistics | P-Values | Description |
|---|-----------------|--------------|----------|-------------|
| Work Stress (X) → Employee Mental Well-being (Y) | -0,227 | 2,399 | 0,017 | Accepted |
| Workplace Spirituality (Z) → Employee Mental Well-being (Y) | 0,466 | 5,425 | 0,000 | Accepted |

Table 3 above explains that the effect of Work Stress on Employee Mental Well-being has a t-statistic value of 2.399 with a p-value <0.05, with a negative sign on the coefficient value, which means that if Work Stress increases, Employee Mental Well-being will decrease on the contrary. Furthermore, the second hypothesis also shows a statistical t-value of 5.425 with a p-value <0.05. With a positive sign on the coefficient value, it can be interpreted that the better Workplace Spirituality, the higher the Employee's Mental Well-being. Because both hypotheses have t-statistic values greater than 1.96 and p-values less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the first and second hypotheses are accepted.

4.3 Indirect Effect

Table 4. Indirect Effect

| Hypothesis | T-Statistics |
|---|--------------|
| Work Stress → Workplace Spirituality → Employee Mental Well-being | 2,336 |

Table 4 above shows that the t statistic is 2.336, greater than 1.96. This finding explains that the workplace spirituality variable can strengthen the influence of work stress on employee mental well-being in health workers. This data means that workplace spirituality increases the mental well-being of workers in the health sector even though there is work stress while carrying out their duties.

5. Discussion

Work Stress Effect on Employee Mental Well-being

Overall, this study produced three results. First, an empirical study showed that Work Stress could significantly affect Work Stress on Employee Mental Well-being. This result is also supported by research results (Bell et al., 2012; Cahill et al., 2020, 2021; Khan & Khurshid, 2017), which show that work stress significantly affects employee mental health and well-being. The results of this study indicate that workers who experience stress in their work can significantly affect their mental well-being. Stress occurs when an employee accepts excessive work in a limited time and deadline to complete the task. Employee welfare is related to the health and well-being of employees, both physically and mentally. It is the responsibility of the employer to create an environment that can promote employee well-being. Stress can be caused by excessive workload, non-standard working hours, and other stress factors (Ostrow, 2011; Schein et al., 1976). Work stress impacts not only physical health but also psychological and family life, so the person deviates from normal functions, which is a negative impact (Kumari & Mishra, 2011).

Workplace Spirituality Effect on Employee Mental Well-being

Workplace Spirituality Effect on Employee Mental Well-being: workplace spirituality and Employee Mental Well-being in a positive relationship. The results of this study are reinforced by previous research (Daaleman & Frey, 2004; Jnaneswar & Sulphay, 2021), which showed the effect of workplace spirituality on employee mental well-being. This finding also shows that a workplace that has a comfortable atmosphere can be applied to shape employee mental well-being. Finally, it can be concluded that Workplace spirituality can have a positive influence, in this case, employee mental well-being.

Workplace Spirituality Moderates the Influence between Work Stress and Employee Mental Well-being

Third, the results of this study reveal the moderating effect of workplace spirituality on the effect of work stress on employee mental well-being. This finding shows that even though health workers experience stress in their work, if the Workplace has a spiritual atmosphere, it will increase employee mental well-being. The research findings are novelty because it has a work stress variable used in this study which has not been widely used in other studies. This study proves empirically that the existence of Workplace spirituality can reduce work stress so it can increase employee mental well-being.

6. Conclusion

This research generally contributes to human resources knowledge, specifically illustrating that work stress can affect employee mental well-being. Workplace spirituality also influences employee mental well-being. Furthermore, workplace spirituality can mediate between work stress and employee mental well-being. The results of this study illustrate that the factor for increasing employee mental well-being is workplace spirituality for health workers who experience work stress while getting high work intensity and non-standard work time. However, work stress conditions can be avoided with a spiritual atmosphere influencing employee mental well-being.

Meanwhile, the implications for hospital managers or managers can provide policies so that health workers do not feel stressed, such as providing social support and implementing a work atmosphere to create a work-life balance. Then, this research has some limitations. First, the study was only conducted in Indonesia with a random sample of workers, so this study cannot represent employee mental well-being as a whole. Second, this study only focuses on health workers, so it cannot describe the effect of work stress on employee mental well-being in employees in other industries. Finally, other studies could involve respondents working in fields other than health and adding control variables such as gender and age.

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