




THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK DEMANDS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON WORK STRESS DURING THE PANDEMIC

HUBUNGAN TUNTUTAN TUGAS DAN DUKUNGAN SOSIAL DENGAN STRES KERJA DI MASA PANDEMI

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ABSTRACT

Background: Stress is the effect of competition and high professional demands in the workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Agency (UPT Keselamatan Kerja) is a technical implementation unit with responsibilities and functions in occupational hygiene, health, and safety. The proliferation of COVID-19 in numerous regions has repercussions for all sectors of society, including agency employees. Those still employed are required to adjust to new conditions. **Purpose:** Analyse the effect of work demands and social support on work stress among UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees during the pandemic. **Method:** The research was conducted on contract and permanent employees (civil servants), which were divided into three distinct work units: the Safety Training Section Corporate Hygiene and Occupational Safety, the Administration Section, the Testing and Inspection Section. This study employed a quantitative approach. The data were collected using observation. **Result:** The findings of the study indicated that: 1) UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees fell into elevated work demands, 2) UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees obtained a high level of social support, 3) Work demands and social support simultaneously affected employees' work stress at UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya. **Conclusion:** Social support affected work stress among UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees with a significance value of 0.004. Work demands and social support concurrently affected the stress experienced by UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees.

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ABSTRAK

Latar belakang: Stres merupakan dampak dari persaingan dan tuntutan profesionalitas yang tinggi di lingkungan kerja. UPT Keselamatan Kerja adalah unit pelaksana teknis yang memiliki tugas dan fungsi di bidang higiene perusahaan, kesehatan, dan keselamatan kerja. Penyebaran COVID-19 berdampak bagi seluruh lapisan masyarakat, termasuk pegawai instansi. Pegawai yang masih bekerja dituntut untuk beradaptasi dengan kondisi baru. **Tujuan:** Menganalisis pengaruh tuntutan kerja dan dukungan sosial terhadap stres kerja pada pegawai UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya di masa pandemi. **Metode:** Penelitian dilakukan pada pegawai kontrak dan pegawai yang berstatus sebagai pegawai tetap atau Pegawai Negeri Sipil yang terbagi di 3 unit kerja berbeda yaitu Seksi Pelatihan Keselamatan Higiene Perusahaan dan Keselamatan Kerja, Seksi Tata Usaha, Seksi Pengujian dan Pemeriksaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode pendekatan kuantitatif. Berdasarkan aspek pengumpulan data, jenis penelitian ini merupakan penelitian observasional. **Hasil:** Berdasarkan hasil penelitian: 1) Pegawai UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya berada pada kategori tuntutan kerja tinggi, 2) Dukungan sosial yang diterima oleh pegawai UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya kategori dukungan sosial tinggi, 3) Tuntutan kerja dan dukungan sosial memiliki pengaruh secara simultan terhadap stres kerja yang dialami oleh pegawai UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya. **Kesimpulan:** Dukungan sosial memiliki pengaruh terhadap stress kerja pada pegawai UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya memiliki nilai signifikansi 0,004. Tuntutan kerja dan dukungan sosial memiliki pengaruh secara simultan terhadap stres kerja yang dialami oleh pegawai UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya.

Kata kunci:
Tuntutan, Pegawai, Pandemi,
Stres, Dukungan



INTRODUCTION

Work plays a significant role in shaping an individual's identity. Positive work experiences are associated with more significant organizational commitment, enhanced performance, and increased job satisfaction (Agarwal *et al.*, 2020). Occupational safety and health programmes must involve human resources, particularly employees, in the company's development. The company must pay a close attention to occupational safety as it is crucial. According to article 87, paragraph 1 of Law Number 13 of 2003, "Every company is required to implement an occupational safety and health management system that is integrated with the company's management system". Occupational health aims to promote and maintain the highest level of physical, mental, and social health from work in various types of work, prevent diseases caused by workplace conditions that have the potential to disrupt health and maintain a work environment suitable for the physiological and psychological abilities of workers, applying these principles to each worker (Daniah, 2016). In addition, the escalating competition and demands for professionalism have resulted in numerous pressures that each individual must confront in the workplace, whether in a business or government agency (Rachma and Wahjono, 2022).

In some cases in developed nations, physical, chemical, and biological hazards are simpler to control since they are readily apparent, consequently, health problems caused by these factors have decreased significantly. Nevertheless, ergonomic and psychosocial factors require additional consideration (Irwandi, 2007). Employees and management frequently overlook psychosocial factors. Frequently, employees are subjected to an unfavourable work environment, including noise exposure, insufficient illumination, and a work climate that does not comply with Minister of Manpower Regulation No. 5 of 2018. Several investigations on work stress differ since the conditions, characteristics, and work environment are vastly different. There is a connection between work stress and a rise in psychological symptoms, namely depression. Chronic stress can reduce a person's ability to regulate emotions, making them highly susceptible to depression (Golkar *et al.*, 2014).

Human resource management is the process of addressing various issues within the scope of employees, workers, managers, and other workers in order to support the activities of an organisation or a company in pursuit of predetermined objectives (Amelia *et al.*, 2022). Good human resource management is the key to the company's success since HR consists of reason, emotions, desires, skills, knowledge, motivation, power, and work. It is possible to improve employee performance by paying attention to work stress.

Employees will experience stress if they are given work demands without determining and estimating their work capacity. Work accumulation and approaching constraints necessitate precision sufficient to address additional tasks. This causes employees to be under constant pressure and stress (Kusumajati, 2010). Work stress can reduce organisational competence, increase the rate of employee attrition, and cause absenteeism, which, if it persists, will result in an unhealthy company structure (Bowling *et al.*, 2015). Work demands that deplete energy are referred to as impediment stressors. These include role ambiguity, employment discomfort, constraints, and interpersonal conflicts (Ramadhani and Etikariena, 2018). Work demands imposed by organizations can place employees under stress, resulting in stress symptoms and work excess (Nugraha and Purba, 2018).

According to Singh and Sharma (2017), work stress is a psychological or emotional manifestation of undesirable or challenging workplace conditions. Work stress will continue to impact employees' interactions with their work environment. Work stress can be beneficial (eustress), which is required to generate maximum achievement and performance, but in general, it is detrimental to employees and businesses (Frichilia, 2016). Work stress is more comprehensive than workers in formal or informal industries. Several aspects of government agencies can also put their employees in a state where they are susceptible to work stress. Work stress and conflict negatively and substantially impact employees' performance at the Regional Office of the DGT of North Sumatra II in Pematangsiantar, according to research conducted by Nadeak *et al.* (2018).

The Occupational Safety and Health Agency (UPT Keselamatan Kerja) is a technical implementation unit entrusted with conducting corporate hygiene, health, and occupational safety tests, examinations, research, and training. Maintaining employees' performance and productivity is essential to fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. Stress at work can negatively impact employees' performance and the agency. These adverse effects include decreased productivity, lack of creativity, low motivation, ineffective decision-making, ineffective employee communication, high absenteeism, and even workplace violence.

The proliferation of COVID-19 continues in numerous areas and has significantly affected the entire community, including agency employee. Those still employed are required to adjust to the new circumstances. Due to inadequate facilities and unfavourable environmental conditions, these restrictions can lead to elevated stress among workers. There are three types of stress during the pandemic: academic stress, employment stress, and family stress (Muslim, 2020.)

Kang et al. (2020) have reported that the conditions of infectious outbreaks, such as *Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome* (SARS) comparable to the COVID-19 pandemic, have imposed psychological burdens on people, particularly those who continue to work, such as anxiety, depression, panic attacks, and psychotic symptoms. Social support can include the quality and quantity of emotional relationships and providing material/services from family, colleagues, and businesses. Employees must maintain a positive perception of their work (Mustafa et al., 2015).

Based on the theoretical explanation, research findings, and initial observations at UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya, a study analysed the effect of work demands, mental workload, and social support on work stress of employees in occupational safety unit. The study was performed on contract and permanent employees or civil servants, which were divided into three distinct work units: the Safety Training Section Corporate Hygiene and Occupational Safety, the Administration Section, and the Testing and Inspection Section. This research has the potential to improve agency efficiency and security. The findings of the study can be used as a reference and factor in designing control programmes in workplaces with similar hazards to enhance occupational safety and health management systems. In addition, this study provides an overview and information about the factors that affect work stress, which can be used to determine the most effective control programme.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study employed a quantitative and observational type with a *cross-sectional* design. Researchers was conducted single observations of the variables under study. The research location was UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya, conducted from 1st to 30th April 2021.

A questionnaire with a questionnaire sheet was used to measure work demands, mental workload, social support, and individual characteristics (*Adventure Quotient*). Each person's adversity quotient is different (Nadhira and Arjanggi, 2020). Intelligence, abbreviated as IQ, is a person's ability to overcome obstacles (Stoltz et al., 2000). AQ is a person's capacity to deal with the challenges they confront, using a significance level of 5% or 0.05. The validity test measures the level of questionnaire validity by comparing the correlation results of the answer data with the total variable score. A reliability test evaluates the questionnaire's dependability by ensuring consistent and stable responses. After selecting valid questionnaire items, reliability evaluations can be conducted using *Cronbach's alpha*. The sampling technique determines the research sample from which conclusions can be drawn, using sample size 2.0 software by Lwng and

Lemeshow. The sample size was calculated using a straightforward random sampling technique. The research sample represents a subset of the population's characteristics (Sugiyono, 2014).

RESULT

Work demand

The research was conducted by distributing questionnaires to all UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees, which were divided into three distinct work units, namely the Safety Training Section Corporate hygiene and Occupational Safety, the Administration Section, and the Testing and Inspection Section, along with instructions for completion. Each work unit has distinct work demands, and the distribution of work demands is depicted in the Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of work demands of respondents at UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya

Work demands	Total	Percentage
Low	12	21.4
Moderate	19	33.9
High	25	44.6
Total	56	100.0

Table 1. reveals that 25 people or 44.6%, fell into the category of high work demands, on the other hand, 12 people or 21.4%, fell into the category of low work demands and 19 people or 33.3%, fell into the category of moderate work demands.

Social support

The social support received by each participant in the study varies considerably. The distribution of social support received by research participants is in Table 2.

Table 2. The distribution of respondents' social support at UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya

Social support	Total	Percentage
Low	8	14.3
Moderate	17	30.4
High	31	55.4
Total	56	100.0

Table 2 demonstrates that the social support obtained by research respondents was in the high category, with 31 individuals or 55.4% in this category. There were 17 respondents or 30.4% with moderate social support, and 8 or 14.6% with low social support. The social support received during the pandemic might come from interpersonal relationships at work or from superiors or family members when working from home.

Work stress

The findings of this study's measurement of work stress indicated that the work stress experienced by respondents was relatively diverse. The following Table 3 depicts the frequency distribution of research participants' work stress.

Table 3. Work stress frequency distribution of respondents at UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya

Work stress	Total	Percentage
Low	9	16.1
Moderate	26	46.4
High	14	25.0
Very High	7	12.5
Total	56	100.0

Table 3 showed that 9 respondents or 16.1% exhibited the low level of work stress. Most research participants (26 individuals or 46.4%) reported experiencing the moderate level of work stress. Further, 14 individuals or 25.0% had the high level of work stress; on the other hand, 7 people or 12.5% had the very high-stress level. In addition to having to transition

to a new work schedule during the pandemic, UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees might experience stress at work due to the large number of tasks that must be completed and the immediate deadlines for submitting assignments and reports. Work stress experienced by employees of UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya needs to be treated so that it does not become excessive or overstress. Stress that arises is a natural thing, but if the stress level has reached a moderate, high level, or especially very high, it is necessary to control it. In order to determine the distribution of research participants who experienced work stress, a cross-tabulation between work units and work stress was also performed.

Each employee in each work unit had a job description, as shown in Table 4. There were five employees in the Safety Training, Corporate Hygiene and Occupational Safety section, with three of them or 60% experiencing the low level of work stress. Then 16 Administration section employees or 62.5% were experiencing the moderate level of work stress. The section of Testing and Inspection had the most significant number of employees, 35, compared to other departments, and the majority, 15 persons or 42.9% experienced the moderate level of work stress.

Table 4. Identification of the work stress distribution among respondents at UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya

Work unit	Work Stress								Total	
	Low		Moderate		High		Very High			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Safety Training, Corporate Hygiene and Occupational Safety	3	60.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	5	100.0
Administration	2	12.5	10	62.5	3	18.8	1	6.3	16	100.0
Testing and Inspection	4	11.4	15	42.9	10	28.6	6	17.1	35	100.0
Total	9	16.1	26	46	14	25	7	12.5	56	100.0

DISCUSSION

The demands of their jobs affected the work stress levels among UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees. In this study, most respondents (44.6%) experienced high work demands (Table 1). This indicated that their work was highly demanding regarding the number of tasks that must be completed in a limited amount of time or that they were exposed to unhygienic working conditions that could negatively affect their health. Reducing work stress to match individual's work demands with individual's work capacity is crucial. Recent studies on work stress indicated that various variables, including elevated work demands, were defined to be a source of stress (Tarwaka, 2015). According to Gibson *et al.* (2011), work demands have a significant relationship with workplace stress.

The present study defines social support as positive actions or treatment provided in the workplace. Social support can take the form of material, informational, emotional, and interpersonal assistance. The social support measurement instruments used in this investigation had been adapted for pandemic conditions, and this was done to evaluate the assistance provided by agencies and colleagues during pandemic office hours. In addition, the study examined interpersonal relationships with colleagues, superiors, and family members when working from home.

As many as 31 individuals or 55.4% of this study's respondents received substantial social support (Table 2). Implementing health protocols that made employees feel secure during the pandemic was a component of the social support received at work. Additionally, coworkers provided support by consistently

reminding employees to adhere to workplace health protocols. In addition, working from home and receiving positive support from colleagues could reduce stress levels. According to Sarafino and Smith, the lack of social support in the workplace is one factor contributing to work stress. Meanwhile, Hamzah *et al.* (2023) underlines that social support may positively affect employees' efforts to reduce workplace stress.

Work stress is a response that occurs when a person's job constraints and demands exceed his knowledge and abilities, causing him to feel overwhelmed when confronting work problems. According to the Health Safety Executive Management Standards Indicator Tools questionnaire standards, the level of work stress is categorised in this study as low, moderate, high, and extremely high levels. Most UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees who participated in the study reported experiencing moderate work stress (46.4%). In comparison, 16.1% of respondents reported moderate stress levels, 14% reported high-stress levels, and 12.5% reported very high-stress levels (Table 3). The work stress of UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees must be managed so that it does not become excessive (overstress). When everyday stress must be managed, especially when it reaches moderate, high, or extremely high levels. There are two types of stress. The first is Eustress resulted from a positive and constructive stress response that can enhance work performance (Massie *et al.*, 2018). On the other hand, distress is a negative response to excessive stress that can result in diminished work performance.

There were 35 respondents in the section of assessment and examination. Respondents with low work stress levels numbered 4 (11.4%), respondents with moderate work stress levels numbered 15 (42.9%), respondents with high work stress levels numbered 10 (28.6%), and respondents with extremely high work stress levels numbered 6 (17.1%) can be seen in Table 4. The majority of respondents came from the section responsible for testing and inspection. In addition, the Testing and Inspection Section was tasked with preparing sampling equipment, such as vacuum compressors, sample bottles, absorbent bottles, blanks, and other equipment used for sampling at the intended company. It was suspected that its burden was more significant than other work units and that its stress levels differed significantly from those of other work units. According to research conducted by Besral and Widiyanti (2015), the burden and individual characteristics of the worker play a significant role in determining stress.

CONCLUSION

The majority of UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees were of productive age, according to the findings of a study examining the impact of work

demands, mental workload, and social support on work stress at UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya. Most of these employees fell into the category of high work demands. However, work demands did not affect the stress levels of UPT employees. Similarly, the majority of social support received by UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees was classified as high. This social support notably affected the work stress experienced by UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya employees. Both work demands and social support concurrently affected the stress levels experienced by the employees at UPT Keselamatan Kerja Surabaya.

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