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WORKING FROM HOME AND STRESS AMONG LECTURERS: A REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 was a year of change to the working environment when the COVID-19 pandemic sent shockwaves not only in Malaysia but also across the globe. This pandemic had seriously affected on higher education as universities shut their premises and countries closed their borders due to lockdown measures (Schleicher, 2020). Interestingly, this pandemic created new environmental norms in the education sector and there has also been hasty and enormous changes in the workplace, from the office to working from home (Schifano et al., 2021; Palumbo et al., 2020). According to Kramer and Kramer (2020), work from home (WFH) is defined as the method involved with working outside of physical space, supported by technology that decreases commuting time and further develops proficiency. Similarly, WFH is otherwise called as remote work (RW), telecommuting, teleworking, schoolwork, workspace, outwork, mobile work, and the adaptable work environment, is a work plan, in which representative do not transport to their work environment in the organization (Bellmann & Hübler, 2020).

There is no denying that one of the changes we face during this pandemic is adapting to the atmosphere of working from home especially among lecturers. For those who work from home for the first time, it may be a little difficult to focus on work with regards to managing guardians, kin and children. Indeed, working distantly presents new difficulties for remaining useful, connected and locked in (Kramer & Kramer, 2020). Apparently, these challenges can be stressful for lecturers as they need to give their commitment to work and at the same time need to take on other responsibilities at home. A few people are amazed by the pressure they feel once the novelty of telecommuting wears off and challenges become more obvious. As reported by The Sun Daily (2021), the stress level for educators has rose to new heights as they endeavor to meet the challenges that come with the WFH structure. Therefore, through the observations and numerous articles that have been reviewed, these are the contributing factors that could lead to stress among lecturers.

Workplace buoyancy

Workplace buoyancy is an individual asset that educators attract on to assist with exploring challenge or hardship at work like contending requests and high jobs (Martin & Marsh, 2008). Workplace buoyancy is similar to, but not identical to the concept of resilience. Resilience refers to an individual's capacity to adapt with large or relentless difficulty that fundamentally affects their capacity to work (e.g., job loss, ongoing underperformance), it is normally the experience of few individuals (Martin & Marsh, 2008). In particular, most lecturers would have faced challenges at work during COVID-19, such as possible hardships in rapidly changing in-class figuring out how to far off settings, challenges with making on the web programming turn out viably for far off

learning, impediments in keeping work-home distinction, and troubles in separating learning for various students (Martin & Marsh, 2008).

Adaptations on work-life balance (WLB)

According to a case study directed at Peking University, the adoption of online learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic posed different obstructions for lecturers due to a lack of experience in online learning management as well as insufficient preparation and support from the IT staff (Bao, 2020). Furthermore, not all homeworkers effectively arrange the social, individual, temporal and actual changes between the limits of home and work (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Homeworking can make it harder to organize work and family plans since the hindrance among work and family areas becomes more permeable (Bulos & Chaker, 1995).

Potential to reduce quality of work-life (QWL)

Quality of work-life (QWL) is defined as a condition in which people are satisfied with their personal and work needs as a result of their involvement in their workplace (Swamy et al., 2015). As a result, it is vital to analyze the quality of educators' work lives as they adapt to online learning. The data exposed that during the pandemic, online learning abridged the QWL among educators at higher levels of education (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2020). Moreover, Sahu (2020) expressed that lecturers are pretty unsure of what they are doing during the learning process. The disbelief in their work because of diminished quality of work life was additionally answered to have caused a decrease in efficiency (Anwer, 2020).

Lack of readiness

Lack of readiness during online learning also contributes to stress among lecturers. Among the causes that cause a lack of readiness are lack of or unclear distinction between work and home, as well as inadequate assistance from organizations, the obscuring of physical and organizational limits between work and home can impact a person's psychological and actual wellbeing (Allen et al., 2015). Furthermore, where necessary smart working was linked to increased stress and weariness, non-mandated smart working was found to be a protective factor, with an overall improvement in employee quality of life (Ipsen, et al., 2021). Lecturers' usual days were already stressful enough, given their hefty workloads, time constraints, and challenges juggling duties all around the world (MacIntyre et al., 2019). Due to the closure of the institutions, lecturers' work has been solely online, and accordingly, there has been a shift from “face-to-face” classroom teaching to exclusively online and at distance, utilizing both synchronous and asynchronous methods, with most lecturers receiving getting no particular preparing to enhance this showing strategy with digital technologies (Schleicher, 2020)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, despite the challenges faced lecturers need to be mentally and physically resilient. They are entrusted to carry out responsibilities as productive employees even when working from home during COVID-19. In fact, the practice of WFH allows productivity to be optimized as best as possible against the risk of cluster outbreak at work which could result in the entire operation being completely shut down. Thus, lecturers need to address the challenges ahead and encounter stress diligently by finding solutions in order to meet the challenges of WFH. Undeniably, COVID-19 provides great insight for educators especially in learning new things, managing tasks and addressing the challenges faced when performing tasks at home. It is an experience for lecturers in higher learning institutions preparing for various possibilities and requires coordination, wisdom and determination in ensuring that the task entrusted can be done effectively.

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