

# **The Role of Organizational Support on Teleworkers' Psychological Strain a Case of Employees in Company X**

## **Chapter I Introduction**

### **1.1. Background of the study**

The nature of work gradually changes along with the advancement of information and communication technology (Sebastian, Dubravka, & John, 2014). Work arrangement is one of the affected aspects. Telework, also known as remote working, telecommuting and anywhere working, is one of the arrangements that becomes possible because of it. Telework is defined as a work arrangement where employees carry out their routine work in a location other than the usual workplace, supported by technology connections (Martinson, Ferris, & Hill, 2003).

In early March 2020, Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID - 19) pandemic has begun to spread in Indonesia. There are more than 4,254,815 confirmed cases in Indonesia on November, 2021 (Devira, 2021). COVID - 19 outbreak in Indonesia, has an impact on various aspects of life. Apart from health care sector, the economy has been significantly affected. Indonesian Government has issued stay-at-home orders and

allowing only certain essential businesses sectors to keep their physical store open. Unprepared employers were forced to implement flexible work arrangement options for their employees to prevent the risk of transmitting COVID-19 infection.

Home-based telecommuting or work from home is currently a phenomenon in Indonesia. Based on Jakarta Department of Labor and Transmigration data, there are as many as 4.074 companies with a total workforce of 1.071.805 people doing home-based telework in capital city of Indonesia on February, 2021. This urgent change of work arrangement raises questions about how best the employers provide the needed support to ensure their employees' well-being, safety and performance. Company X as an automotive company based in Jakarta, is one of companies that implementing work-from-home policy for office-based employees. This research was conducted on headquarter office of Company X located in capital city of Indonesia with employees around 350 people.

A previous study underlined that psychological condition and well-being of teleworker should be considered as an important matter so that organizations and individuals can take steps to minimize any potential of negative impact (Lynn & Sandi, 2003). Psychological strain or job stress is one of the main concerns on telework well-being. It happens when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. In remote condition, teleworkers may experience high level of psychological strain due to less feedback, social support and feeling isolated from their supervisor and co-workers compared to office-based employees

(Bentley, et al., 2016). Besides that, teleworkers may feel unsure about their place in the organization and concerned about missed opportunities at the office (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Higher psychological strain could negatively affect job satisfaction and job performance of the teleworker (Kurland & Bailey, 2002).

Organizational Supports associated with teleworking are thought to have an important influence on psychological strain as telework differs from office-based worker. Bentley, et al., (2016) found that teleworkers with sufficient provision of organizational social support increases job satisfaction and decrease psychological strain, due to reduce of social isolation. Providing reliable technology, access to information and essential support for teleworking communications help teleworker to socially integrated with their organization and contributes to organization with higher work performance (Bentley, et al., 2016).

Therefore, to face all the challenges in the teleworking work environment, it is necessary to have strategies that promote social and teleworking support. The support serves in the best interest of empowering psychological strength and leading to a relative reduction in social isolation. Providing reliable technology, access to information, and essential support for teleworking communications help teleworkers be socially integrated with their organization and contribute to organizations with higher work performance (Bentley, et al., 2016). Given the importance of organizational support in the teleworker context and the lack of similar research in the Indonesian setting, researching this context is necessary.

## 1.2. Research Questions

Based on the research background, the followings are the identification of the problem prepared in this study:

1. What are the perceptions of teleworkers toward organizational, social, and specific support from their company?
2. Does organizational, social, and specific support have an impact on teleworkers' psychological strain?

## 1.3. Scope of the Research

Seven delimitations are defined by the researcher to set the scope of this research:

1. This research examines specifically teleworkers in Company X headquartered in Jakarta city.
2. Teleworker in this research refers to employees of Company X who carry out their work at home through a support of technological and communication devices (Martinson, Ferris, & Hill, 2003).
3. Perceived Organizational Support here described as teleworker's perception regarding how the organization consider about their opinions, well-being, goals, values, and the willingness to provide help (Eisenberger et al., 1997).

4. Perceived social support is defined as how much employees perceive that they are supported by their co-workers and supervisor (O'Driscoll, 2000).
5. Perceived Social Support here refers to teleworker's perception regarding co-worker's helpful information, feedback, advice, and practice assistance (O'Driscoll, 2000).
6. Psychological Strain in this research described as the degree of psychological pressures experienced by the teleworkers when the job requirements do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of teleworkers (NIOSH, 1999).
7. This research also measures the perception of teleworkers regarding technical supports that have been provided by Company X as a part of specific teleworker support.

Aspects that refer to organizational, social support, and psychological strain other than those mentioned above are not discussed in this research.

#### **1.4. Purpose of the Research**

Based on the research questions, the research objectives have been derived as follows:

1. To investigate the perceptions of teleworkers toward organizational, social, and specific teleworker support from their company.
2. To determine the impact of organizational, social, and specific teleworker support on teleworkers' psychological strain.

### **1.5. Significance of the Research / Benefits of the research**

The managerial implication of this study is to help the company to provide and manage the needed aspects of organizational supports on teleworkers and better understanding on how employers in organizations can assist their home-based teleworker employees. With a deeper study of teleworkers' well-being and their perception on organizational support, manager as a leader could make a thoughtful decision regarding on important key factors for future remote work arrangement.

On academic implication, this study contributes to providing updated views of how teleworker's psychological strain inversely affected by social and organizational supports. Moreover, the result gives some contributions to the literature of telework arrangement and for future related research.

### **1.6. Structure of the Research**

Chapter 1 presents the background of the research, research questions, delimitations, statement of the problem, significance of the research, objectives of the research, and structure of the research. Chapter 2 capture a review of literature, theoretical framework and relevant research associated with the problem addressed in this study. Chapter 3 include the methodology and procedures used for data collection, method of data analysis, validity and reliability testing and ethical consideration. Chapter 4 contains an analysis of the data, presentation of the results and the findings.

Chapter 5 offers discussion of the researcher's findings, implications for practice, limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

