SENSE OF HUMOR AND WORK STRESS IN PRODUCTION EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Stress as a symptom can attack anyone, anywhere and anytime, such as in the world of work. Stress that occurs in the world of work is commonly called work stress. The sources of work stress are very diverse, can appear at any time and the reactions are also different for each person. Work stress can have positive and negative consequences. The negative impact of work stress can be reduced by developing a sense of humor. Someone who has a high sense of humor tends to think positively and does not easily give up in facing problems so that it can reduce the level of stress felt. The purpose of this study was to test the relationship between sense of humor and work stress in production employees. The population in this study were production employees of a Spring Bed Industry company in Tangerang. The data collection method used the Sense of Humor Scale and the Work Stress Scale of Production Employees. The correlation obtained between the independent variable and the dependent variable was rxy = -0.206 and p = 0.032. This shows that there is a significant negative relationship between the sense of humor variable and the work stress variable in production employees. This means that the higher the sense of humor, the lower the level of stress in production employees.

Keywords: Sense of Humor, Work Stress, Employees.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Basically, every individual as a human being always receives stimulus from the surrounding environment through the senses they have. It is also believed that each individual has a certain threshold to receive the stimulus. If the stimulus that enters a person is too large exceeding the threshold, an imbalance occurs. This symptom is commonly called stress and if this symptom occurs in a specific work situation it is called work stress.

According to Behr and Newman (in Rice, 1998:194) work stress is an interaction between work conditions and worker characteristics that change physical and psychological functions from their normal functions. In other words, work stress appears as a form of disharmony in the interaction of individuals with their work environment.

Every aspect of the work environment can be perceived as stressful by employees depending on the employee's perception of the environment, whether he feels stressed or not. This means that in the same work situation one employee can experience stress, while another does not.

Sources in the work environment that can cause stress include poor physical work space, excessive workload, work that is too fast, work that is too simple, poor relationships with superiors or co-workers, and an unfavorable organizational climate.

Work stress can be experienced by anyone under certain conditions and in various types of work. A person with a high position or a low position can experience stress. Just like an

employee of an organization that produces goods, it is possible to experience work stress, whether mild, moderate, or severe. Production employees are required to work producing goods with targets that have been determined by the organization with a shift work system which can have emotional and biological effects, due to disturbances in the circadian rhythm of sleep or wake cycle, temperature patterns and adrenaline release rhythms (Munandar, 2001:383). In addition, in producing goods, production machines are used which can cause noise and the risk of work accidents. Lack of attention to environmental cleanliness can also be a source of stress. Not to mention personal problems faced outside the work environment.

Job stress is seen as a problem that needs attention because it can have an impact on both the organization and the employees, but the impact is not always negative. The positive impacts of job stress include being a stimulus to act and achieve. While the negative impacts on the organization include chaos in work results, operational disruptions, decreased performance and productivity, and decreased profits because employees experience physical health problems, psychological disorders, and behavioral changes that affect their performance.

Stress experienced by employees can be prevented and its severity suppressed with humor. Greenberg (1999:277) stated that one way to reduce stress is to create humor, because psychologically humor will reduce tension, stress and anger experienced by individuals. So humor can be used as a form of coping with events that can cause stress.

Humor is a form of expression that aims to arouse laughter to channel inner tension. Laughter can stimulate the heart to supply oxygen to the lungs and provide energy to brain cells so that the person concerned has a positive way of thinking in seeing life. Furthermore, laughter due to hearing humor can maintain the balance of the soul (I Dewa Putu, 2003:3).

Someone who does humor well will seem like someone who can see everything in a humorous perspective. Being close to someone who is good at making others laugh is definitely fun. The atmosphere will be lively, and all problems will feel light. Humorous behavior or activities other than behavior can also be in the form of storytelling skills (usually laughing at someone's silliness, stupidity, or ignorance), singing or twisting words. Humorous material can be in the form of stories, riddles, fairy tales, songs, and even words. In seeing and understanding humor, a sense of humor is needed so that humorous material can seem funny.

Sense of humor is an individual's sensitivity in seeing funny events or funny stories (Sarlito, 1996). In other words, sense of humor concerns our feelings in responding to humor and then expressing it by laughing or smiling. With a sense of humor, individuals tend to think positively and do not easily give up when facing problems.

Sense of humor gives the ability to find pleasure, express joy and release tension (jesthealth.com). In addition, a sense of humor can make someone able to laugh at themselves before being laughed at by others, because entertaining yourself is a very helpful component in dealing with stress.

Psychoanalysts have long emphasized that humor facilitates healthy adjustment by helping to cope with feelings of anxiety (Kris, 1988; Hartanti, 2003). Other research on the relationship between sense of humor and stress shows a negative correlation (Deaner & Mc.Conata, 1999; Moran, 1996; Hartanti, 2003).

Someone who has a high sense of humor tends to easily understand and appreciate humorous materials, easy to laugh or smile in all situations and easy to feel happy and easy to make funny stories and make other people laugh. Several figures in their research suggest that individuals with a high sense of humor experience less stress because they are able to generate humor to overcome stress.

Based on the background of the problem presented, the formulation of the problem proposed is "is there a relationship between sense of humor and work stress in production department employees?"

In accordance with the problems to be studied, the purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between sense of humor and work stress of production department employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Stress

The definition of stress that is still used as a reference and in writings or research that discuss stress is the definition put forward by Hans Selye, who can be said to be the "discoverer" or father of stress.

According to Selye 1936 (Greenberg, 1999:5) stress is a non-specific response of the body to any demands on it. This definition assumes that the cause of stress comes from outside the organism (external) which causes the organism to give certain reactions or physiological responses (internal). In short, stress is a person's internal response when faced with a stressor.

In further developments, many definitions of stress emerged, such as those put forward by Noi & Smith (1990), who define stress as a reaction felt by humans when under pressure from outside or from an intangible cause, the form of which can be a lack or excess of stimulation which can cause feelings of prolonged boredom (Subekti Doelhadi, 1997:379).

In general, stress according to Maramis (1990:379), is defined as any problem or demand for self-adjustment, which if not handled properly, will disrupt the balance of human life.

Thus, it can be concluded that stress is a response that individuals have to circumstances that provide pressure, stimulation and burdens that are not commensurate with themselves, so that they are felt as a threat to the individual's life.

Job stress essentially refers to conditions of work that threaten individuals. These threats can come from job demands or from the individual's unmet needs. Job stress appears as disharmony between the individual and his/her work environment.

Bernardin (1990) defines work stress as a situation that is created where work-related factors interact with factors within the employee and change the physiological or psychological condition in such a way that it forces a person to deviate from their normal function (Haryanto, 1996: 19).

From the definition above, it can be concluded that the definition of work stress is stress that occurs in the workplace caused by conditions related to the work environment such as the physical environment, organizational structure, and interpersonal relationships.

Beehr and Newman (Rice, 1998: 195-197) group work stress symptoms into three general categories, namely physiological, psychological and behavioral symptoms.

- a. Physiological symptoms, including: increased heart rate and blood pressure, increased adrenaline and noradrenaline secretion, stomach upset, physical fatigue, death, respiratory problems, excessive sweating, skin disorders, headaches, cancer and sleep disorders.
- b. Psychological symptoms, including: anxiety, tension, confusion and irritability, feelings of frustration, anger and irritation, emotions become sensitive, and hyperactive, feelings of pressure, ineffective communication skills, withdrawal and depression, feelings of isolation and alienation, boredom and dissatisfaction at work, mental fatigue, and decreased intellectual function, loss of concentration, loss of spontaneity and creativity, and decreased self-esteem.
- c. Behavioral symptoms, including: laziness and avoiding work, decreased performance and productivity, increased dependence on alcohol, sabotage at work, overeating as an escape, reducing food intake as a withdrawal behavior, and may be combined with depression, loss of appetite, weight loss, increased high-risk behavior, aggressive brutality and stealing, disharmonious relationships with friends and family, suicidal tendencies.

Sense of Humor

The root of the word humor is "umor" which means liquid or fluid. In the Middle Ages, humor was associated with energy that was considered related to body fluids and emotional states. In the dictionary of psychology humor means a condition of a situation that can arouse passion and enthusiasm to experience feelings of emotions expressed or manifested by one person for another in relation to each other can cause laughter or joy.

Chapman and Foot, (1976:2) define humor as a complex situation that can cause joy. A similar opinion is also expressed by Danandjaja (2002:14) who defines humor as a verbal and non-verbal expression that can cause or cause the listener (or the speaker) to feel tickled by the funny feeling so that they are encouraged to laugh. The thing that tickles the funny feeling is because in humor there are elements of surprise, strangeness, unreasonableness, stupidity, deceptive nature, oddity, contradictory, naughtiness and others.

Arthur Koestler (Komaryatun, 1999:16), states that humor is a stimulus that has uniqueness and complexity with a free-valued response, which produces stereotypes, responses that are expected as psychological reflexes. This definition emphasizes humor more as a stimulus or external stimulus received by individuals.

Someone who has a sense of humor means that they still have a tendency to think positively, a broad horizon of life, are creative, and do not give up easily. In other words, there is no problem that is difficult for someone who has a high sense of humor. Freud stated that a sense of humor is the highest self-defense process in humans (Martin & Lefcourt, 1983; in Alexander, 1995:37).

It can be concluded that a sense of humor is an individual's sensitivity to humor which can help individuals to deal with unpleasant situations by creating humor and responding to the humor that exists and is expressed with smiles and laughter.

According to (Thorson and Powell, 1993: Kerkka et al., 2004) Sense of humor is multidimensional and includes:

a. Humor production, which is the ability of individuals to think about things that exist or happen to themselves to entertain themselves or others.

- b. Humor appreciation, which is the ability to respond to humor created or uttered by others. The response given can be in the form of laughing or at least smiling if someone makes a joke.
- c. Humor as a coping mechanism, which is the use of humor in dealing with difficulties experienced.
- d. Attitude toward humor, which is an individual's assessment of a joke or humor as something positive or negative.

Hartanti and Rahaju (2003:395) revealed two aspects of sense of humor, namely the ability to observe and find something funny and the ability to create something funny. This is different from the opinion of Baughman (1974:53) who stated that aspects of sense of humor include the ability to relax, to escape from tension, to have fun without destroying the happiness of other individuals, to live illogically, to laugh with other individuals, not at the individual.

FRAMEWORK OF THOUGHT

Leufcourt and Martin (1983) said that finding humor in every situation and laughing with others can be a powerful antidote to stress (Trout, 2000). With humor, people will be able to face all problems with jokes and laughter so that their burdens feel lighter (Hartanti & Rahaju, 2003:394). In addition, Greenberg (1999:277) stated that one way to reduce stress is to create humor.

Sense of humor makes a person accept and appreciate the inconsistencies in life, giving happiness and joy. Baughman (1974: 49) states that sense of humor is a very valuable human quality to help in understanding inconsistencies.

Sense of humor as a form of coping with events that can cause stress. This is in line with what Kuiper, Martin & Olinger (1993) stated that sense of humor can be used as a coping and self-adjustment facility (Truot, 2000). Freud stated that humor is the highest self-defense mechanism in humans (Martin & Lefcourt, 1983; Alexander 1995:37). The results of other studies on the relationship between sense of humor and stress show a negative correlation (Deaner & Mc. Conata, 1999; Moran, 1996; Hartanti, 2002:395).

Humans in life must experience various kinds of problems, especially in life like today which is increasingly complex. These problems arise from light to heavy, in the short term to long term. In facing these problems, some individuals are calm, so they are able to overcome these problems so that the individual gets wisdom. While some face problems with confusion so that eventually tension or stress occurs.

In general, stress is caused by factors within the individual and from outside the individual. The work environment is one of the factors from outside the individual that can cause stress and is commonly called work stress (job stress or occupational stress).

Almost every condition in the work environment can cause stress, but it depends on how big the problem is and how the individual deals with the problem. Employees who are less able to handle their problems will experience stress. Work stress appears as a form of disharmony between individuals and their work environment. The same thing was stated by Beehr and Newman (Rice, 1998:194) who stated that work stress is an interaction between work conditions and worker characteristics that change normal physical and psychological functions.

Work stress experienced by individuals as employees can be prevented or reduced in severity by developing a sense of humor. Sense of humor is an individual's sensitivity in responding to humor or jokes. Humor can free individuals from the burden of anxiety, confusion and misery. Someone who has a sense of humor will be better able to overcome their problems if their environmental conditions provide opportunities for individuals. The results of research from several figures state that individuals with a high sense of humor experience less stress because they are able to generate humor to overcome stress (Martin & Lefcourt, 1983; Keinan & Teshimousky, Arditi, 1993; Nezu, Nezu & Blissett, 1988: Moran & Massan, 1997).

Based on the theoretical concept described in the literature review above, the author proposes a hypothesis to be tested. "There is a relationship between sense of humor and work stress in production employees".

RESEARCH METHODS

The variables whose data were collected in this study are:

- 1. Independent variable:
 - Sense of Humor is an individual's sensitivity to humor that can help individuals deal with unpleasant situations by creating humor and responding to the humor that exists and is expressed with a smile and laughter. Factors in the sense of humor include a person's ability to create humor, the ability to appreciate humor, the use of humor as a coping mechanism and a person's attitude towards humor.
- 2. Dependent variable:
 - Job Stress is an individual's response to circumstances that give pressure, stimulation and burdens that are not commensurate with themselves related to work that can be caused by conditions related to the work environment such as the physical environment, organizational structure, and interpersonal relationships which can affect the physiological, psychological and behavioral state of the individual.

The population in this study were 315 employees of the production department of PT. Duta Abadi Primantara located in Tangerang. The sample in this study was 108 employees, using simple random sampling technique.

The data collection method used to identify and reveal variables is the Likert scale model method with five alternative answers, namely the Sense of Humor Scale compiled based on the theory put forward by Thorson and Powell (1993) and the Work Stress Scale based on work stress symptoms related to physiological, psychological and behavioral aspects put forward by Beehr and Newman (Rice, 1998:195-197).

From 40 items after analysis, 31 valid items were obtained and nine items were declared invalid. Corrected Item Total Correlation (rit) was obtained at 0.0481-0.7844 and Alpha if Item Deleted was obtained at 0.6047-0.8719 which was compared with Alpha per factor.

The work stress scale of production employees consisting of 50 items after being analyzed obtained 40 valid items and ten items were declared invalid. Corrected Item Total Correlation (rit) obtained was -0.3256-0.7369 and Alpha if Item Deleted obtained was 0.3858-0.7950 which was compared with Alpha per factor. This reliability is 0.8915 and is included in the reliable category.

Analysis of research data using Pearson Product Moment with the help of SPSS 11.5 for Windows program obtained rxy = -0.206, with p = 0.032 (<0.05) which means Ho is rejected, Ha is accepted. This means that there is a significant negative correlation between sense of humor and work stress in production employees. This negative correlation shows that the

higher the sense of humor possessed by production employees, the lower the level of work stress experienced or vice versa.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study strengthen the statement that one way to reduce stress is to create humor because someone who has a sense of humor tends to think positively, creatively and does not give up easily when facing difficult problems. The results of this study support the research of Deaner and Mc. Conata (1999) which shows a negative correlation between sense of humor and stress and supports the theory expressed by Kuiper and Martin that someone with a high sense of humor experiences less stress because they are able to generate humor to overcome stress, so it can be said that a sense of humor can reduce the level of stress experienced by production employees.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, there is a significant negative relationship between sense of humor and work stress in production employees at PT. Duta Abadi Primantara Tangerang. This can be interpreted that the higher the sense of humor possessed by production employees, the lower the work stress experienced or vice versa.

SUGGESTION

- 1. Theoretical Suggestions
 - a. The results of this study indicate a negative relationship between sense of humor and work stress in production employees, therefore it is recommended to conduct similar research in other parts of PT. Duta Abadi Primantara to see whether it will produce the same conclusion.
 - b. For researchers who are interested in conducting research on sense of humor, they can test sense of humor in terms of personality type and gender.
- 2. Practical Suggestions

Based on the results of the study, the categorization of work stress in production employees is at the median level. This shows that the work stress experienced by production employees is at a moderate level, so it is expected that the ability of employees to face and overcome pressure, stimuli, and burdens that are felt as threats, especially in the work environment, needs to be improved so that the level of work stress does not become high. The methods that can be used are by thinking positively about pressure and criticism, creating humor in the right situation, seeking social support from both family and coworkers, and involvement from the organization is needed to implement stress management programs.

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