

Inspecting The Impact of WFH Policy on Indonesian Workers to Help Improve Human Resources Quality During Pandemic

Nusrhotun Aristia Zulfa^{1*}, Mona Zulfa Aszar², Markus Apriono³

¹ Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Jember, Jember, Indonesia.

² Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Jember, Jember, Indonesia.

³ Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Jember, Jember, Indonesia.

*Corresponding author. Email: nusrhotun.aristia.z@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article pursues to provide an overview of WFH as a virtual communication medium, that can be used in work affairs in the new normal era. As well as the WFH policy analysis of the Indonesian worker's performance quality during the Covid-19 pandemic. That analysis is conduct so that the next time the quality of human resources and worker productivity can be improved even though it is still through WFH (working from home). And it is also hoped that this WFH policy can become a means of communication infrastructure in the future life in the new normal era. The method we use is a qualitative approach method. Qualitative research is research that is descriptive and tends to use analysis. Process and meaning are highlighted in qualitative research. This article yields the result that WFH has pros and cons, but it has a high chance to be continued with the awareness of employees to build a good atmosphere at home such as a special environment for work. Meanwhile, a management and leadership system from superiors is also needed to protect subordinates, and a two-way effort is needed either from employees or managers.

Keywords: Covid-19, New Normal, WFH, WFO, Worker Productivity

1. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 has an impact on the order of life in the world in various sectors, ranging from health, education, social, and even economic. In addition, many things that could have been done were hampered and limited in their implementation. The impacts of Covid-19 have created new policies for many sectors, one of which is the employment sector.

The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in its survey stated that there were several policies carried out by companies for workers during the PSBB. Various efforts were made to retain the workforce. BPS noted, as many as 76 out of 100 companies are still operating, as usual, the number of workers tends to remain constant. Meanwhile, there were 21 companies whose workforce was reduced.

Work From Home is one of the policies initiated by the government since March 16, 2020. WFH is synonymous with doing office work, meeting, discussing, and coordinating together with colleagues or work partners from their respective employees'

homes virtually. Online survey data on the emergency impact of the coronavirus on workers or employees shows that as many as 51% of employees continue to work but only from home or not to the office. This was the right policy to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus at that time by not meeting face to face.

However, it turns out that the implementation of WFH actually existed before the Covid-19 pandemic. The way of working from home has been applied since the days of Hunter-Gatherers (hunters and gatherers) where humans hunted and grew food around their homes. Then WFH was also applied in medieval times with a more modern scheme of human life.

The idea of working from home also emerged in 1970 after the industrial revolution with a concept called "telecommuting" which can be interpreted as a form of work agreement with employees or workers who can carry out work activities flexibly and do not have to come to the office by utilizing and maximizing communication technology.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, especially during the Enforcement of Community Restrictions (PPKM), the Ministry of Manpower (Kemnaker) issued rules governing working relationships, including WFH (Work From Home). Quoted from cnbcindonesia.com that the Director-General of Industrial Relations and Employment Social Security, Indah Anggoro Putri, said that the Minister of Manpower Decree No. 104 of 2021 covers 2 things. First, the implementation of the work from home system or Work From Home (WFH) and working in the office/workplace or Work From Office (WFO). Second, the implementation of wages and other workers' rights. Third, regarding companies that were forced to lay off workers due to the impact of the Covid- 19 pandemic.

The application of WFH to workers must be permanent and obliged to obtain rights in the form of wages or salaries, and the application of WFO is also based on a shifting system or division of working time and working days in one month in turns by looking at the percentage of workers.

With all the policies that have been given, it requires the readiness of the human resources themselves in achieving the effectiveness of implementing the WFH (Work From Home) policy. This is because the enactment of WFH is also not due to a flexible work culture that is instilled from the start in every agency, but rather a policy requirement that is imposed in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The implementation of WFH must also maintain the productivity and performance of each worker, even though every activity is carried out only from home.

Worker performance can be influenced by factors that are divided into internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are obtained from within himself such as motivation, ability, desire, personality, as well as attitudes and behavior. While external factors are obtained from outside, such as relationships between employees, lifestyle, and work environment.

Then, will the implementation of WFH still be able to improve performance and stabilize productivity for workers? And if the pandemic is over, can WFH still be implemented as an option at work?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unfavorable impact on certain organizations or companies, both in terms of income and operations. The public must practice social distancing, self-isolation, and limit gatherings to contain the spread of the virus. As a result, companies are forced to implement several measures that at the same time reduce the freedom of organizations and businesses to operate. One of the policies that are common and implemented in almost

all work sectors is the Work From Home (WFH) policy which was implemented on March 16, 2020.

Work From Home is a model or work agreement where employees get the flexibility to work in terms of place and time of work with the help of telecommunication technology. WFH is an effective option that is believed to be a means to suppress the spread of the virus, as well as prevent company losses caused by the pandemic. With the implementation of WFH, it indicates that employees are not in the office where they usually work. This has a great opportunity to reduce employee productivity levels. In addition, the home environment is also generally not conducive and less supportive for doing office work. According to Siagian (2014: 59) the work environment is divided into 2 major dimensions, namely the physical work environment and the non-physical work environment.

2.1 Physical Work Environment

It is a physical environment that exists around the workplace that can affect employees either directly or indirectly. Among them are the shape of the building, work equipment, and work facilities. The more complete and in good condition, the better the physical work environment created.

2.2 Non-Physical Work Environment

The non-physical work environment is more directed to the level of harmony in the work/office environment. There are several indicators, including the relationship between colleagues at the same level, the relationship between superiors and employees, as well as cooperation between employees themselves.

With the WFH policy, the quality of the work environment will certainly decline. For example, home facilities are not as complete as in the office, to workers who cannot meet face-to-face and socialize directly. This will affect the quality of the performance of the employees so that it has an impact on the results of their work.

However, in practice, WFH still has regulations made to discipline employees. There are also policies such as absences that include hours, and certain times when employees must be active in certain communication media such as Whatsapp and Telegram.

In addition, not all employees are required to WFH. There are some government peranakan offices that require community service staff to keep working in the office. For example, the Department of Population and Civil Registration is part of the community service department. In addition, several companies also implement policies such as shift changes and others

We conducted a survey that supports information about this Work From Home policy. As previously noted, this policy invites pros and cons from each community. And this is where we will present most of the opinions of those who are for and against this WFH policy. Those who agree with this policy have the opinion that the enactment of Work From Home does not affect the quality of performance, especially for workers who in their work have a relationship with gadgets or computers that can control their work anywhere. The quality of the performance of the workers can also be improved by participating in trainings held by the company, attending webinars or online seminars, and maintaining an attitude of leadership and a sense of responsibility even though working from home.

Work From Home is also predicted to be a system or way of working that can be realized in the future, even after this pandemic is over. Working from home can be an option for workers who have obstacles or are unable to hold work meetings in person. Workers can also use this option if there is an emergency situation where they can only work online.

In addition, some respondents have the opposite opinion where they contra or disagree with this Work From Home policy. They argue that with the implementation of this policy there are things that actually reduce the quality of work, such as the occurrence of missed communication between workers. Actually, Work From Office also does not escape the problem of missed communication, but working in the office can solve these problems quickly and directly. Therefore, missed communication that may occur during the implementation of Work From Home will be more difficult to overcome in realizing the missed communication itself directly and quickly.

Other respondents also revealed that the implementation of Work From Home could trigger laziness, and even procrastination in doing a job assignment. The work environment at home is often an obstacle for workers in carrying out their work. The interaction between gadgets for a long time can interfere with eye health, even sitting for a long time can also interfere with spinal health. This is different when working in an office where movement or interaction can be much wider and combines sitting, standing, even moving and walking.

However, from all the pros and cons that have been expressed by the respondents, they do not refuse if in the future this Work From Home policy can become one of the options in the work system. They revealed that Work From Home can be an alternative for workers if something emergency occurs and it is not possible to come to the office. The WFH policy can be enforced as long as there is no salary deduction and does not affect the incentives. So it might be

better if later the Work From Home policy can be combined with Work From Office which can complement each other.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

In this article, the method used is a qualitative approach method. Qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written spoken words from people and observable behavior. Bogdan and Taylor (in Moleong, 2006).

This article is supported by theories, journals and related articles to find facts in the data and compiled descriptively. This article with qualitative method aims to describe the results of data processing in the form of a general description in words by understanding social situations in depth, finding patterns, hypotheses, and theories that are in accordance with the data obtained in the field.

4. RESULT & DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a prolonged impact on various sectors, including the employment sector. As an effort to prevent the spread of the virus, a WFH policy was implemented for employees. That is done to prevent crowds and restrain the movement of people as much as possible. Like most other policies, WFH also has side-by-side negative and positive impacts. WFH is considered to be a solution for a country or region to suppress the spread of the virus. With the implementation of WFH, various tasks can be completed more efficiently because they can be done from anywhere. However, WFH has an unfavorable effect on health because the working object is only a gadget, there is no movement as is usually done when WFO. The social spirit of workers is also affected because they cannot interact directly with their co-workers physically. If employees have a bad network and work environment, it can also have an impact on the quality of their work.

The WFH system is rated as a sustainable system. When the pandemic is over, the WFH work system can be one of the options considered to be applied in several fields of work more broadly, not only limited to freelancers. This is done because it turns out that working and meeting from anywhere can help maintain work efficiency when co-workers are far from each other. Then a WFH system can also be applied in the form of a 'day off shift' where workers are allowed to work from home for 1 day in a week to help prevent the level of depression that may arise if they are in a stressful office environment for too long

Table 1. The Result from Respondents

	The workers performance quality of WFH Comparing to WFO	Opinion on the Sustainability of the WFH System After Pandemic
Respondent 1	<p>Undisturbed because some areas of work can be controlled from home. Except for more specific jobs such as surgeons or technical matters related to tools, it can't be with WFH. But if the work is already computerized, there is no problem with WFH performance, because it can be arranged or control everywhere. WFH can be controlled from anywhere with the sophistication of technology and gadgets. So, the quality of the performance is not compromised. However, the negative impact or effect of WFH is because the interaction with the gadget is longer or lasts longer and cannot move from the seat it affects eye health, because the radiation from the gadget is either a cellphone or laptop, when sitting for a long time it also affects spine, pelvis. Meanwhile, WFO combines sitting on a bench, interaction with gadgets, and a wide range of motion in the work area, allowing more movement so that the body condition is not static. If WFH is more or more dominant, sitting still, sitting in front of the gadget, can't move, can't do anything, even while eating is sometimes difficult. For the quality of performance in several fields, the quality will not be disturbed and can still maintain the quality from home.</p>	<p>There is no problem, the important thing is that the salary is fixed, it doesn't affect the intensive. Because, some companies end up cutting salaries because of the WFH policy, even though the employees will still work, so as long as it doesn't affect employee intensiveness, it doesn't matter if this WFH policy is still enforced. However, if, for example, due to WFH, there is a pay cut or an effect on the incentives, it is better to do WFO.</p>
Respondent 2	<p>When WFH the performance of employees is slightly decreased, performance is also slow, making employees lazy because the atmosphere at home makes them comfortable. So, to work has its challenges. What's more, it is supported by the internet, sometimes some workers like to procrastinate and get distracted by other things.</p>	<p>It seems that if a working system is made like a kind of WFH it is also good. After all, sometimes there may be people who require employees to go out of town, far from the office. Or for example, employees go to their hometowns because there is a need. The WFH option can come in handy.</p>
Respondent 3	<p>The quality is definitely not as good as the WFO because it is certain that there was a miscommunication at WFH. So, frequent occurrence of (1) Miscommunication. As an intention, but what the interlocutor understands is the opposite. And sometimes misunderstandings are also not realized directly. So that the performance of both parties is not compatible. If the WFO is very possible there is also a miscommunication, but it is quickly realized because it can directly monitor work events so that miscommunication is less likely to occur. (2) Network. Indonesia does not yet have super-fast internet spread throughout the region. Some areas are still difficult to get a good network. Thus, the WFH process is also often hampered.</p>	<p>It is less effective for WFH, but due to the pandemic, it must be done. After the pandemic, it might be more effective if WFO only.</p>

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Generally, all authors contributed to the making of this article. Arsitia contributed to carrying out a qualitative methodological approach, compiling discussions and results, conducting respondent surveys, and compiling references. Mona contributed to writing abstracts, compiling discussions and results, conducting respondent surveys, concluding the discussion, and editing. Drs. Markus Apriyono, MM. is helping to guide, provide input, and supervise so that our articles can be completed properly.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Dr. Isti Fadiah, M.Si., for her information and suggestion regarding our analysis about the decline in the quality of Indonesian human resources during WFH in the pandemic, and motivate us to make articles as best as we can.

REFERENCES

- [1] Y. Zhong, Y. Li, J. Ding, and Y. Liao, Risk "Management: Exploring Emerging Human Resource Issues during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *J. Risk Financial Manag.*, Vol. 14, No. 228, 2021. doi : <https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm14050228>
- [2] D. Daraba, W. Hillman, S. Rudi, and M. Faisal, *Working From Home during the Corona Pandemic : Investigating the Role of Authentic Leadership, Psychological Capital, and Gender on Employee Performance* [Internet], 2021. [Cited on 2021 Sept 2]. Available from : <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311975.2021.1885573>
- [3] D. Vibriyanti, *Work From Home : Cara Bekerja Baru di Masa Pandemi COVID-19* [Internet], 2020. [Cited on 2021 Sept 2]. Available from : <https://kependudukan.lipi.go.id/mencatatcovid19/work-from-home-cara-bekerja-baru-di-masa-pandemi-covid-19/>
- [4] M. Elena, *Di Masa Covid-19, Pengusaha Ternyata Lebih Pilih Merumahkan Karyawan dari PHK* [Internet], 2020. [Cited on 2021 Sept 2]. Available from : [https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20200922/9/1294835/di-masa-covid-19-pengusaha-ternyata-lebih-pilih-erumahkan-](https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20200922/9/1294835/di-masa-covid-19-pengusaha-ternyata-lebih-pilih-erumahkan-karyawan-dari-phk)
- [5] S. Nabilla, and N. Nunung, *Dampak COVID-19 Terhadap Tenaga Kerja di Indonesia* [Internet], 2020. [Cited on September 2 2021]. Available from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340925534_Dampak_COVID-19_terhadap_Tenaga_Kerja_di_Indonesia
- [6] O. Mungkasa, *Bekerja dari Rumah (Working From Home/WFH) : Menuju Tataan Baru Era Pandemi COVID 19* [Internet], 2020. [Cited on 2021 Sept 2]. Available from : <https://journal.bappenas.go.id/index.php/jpp/article/view/119>
- [7] G. Azkiya, *Fakta Menarik WFH (Work From Home) yang Menjadi Pilihan di Masa Pandemi* [Internet], 2021. [cited on 2021 Sept 4]. Available from : <https://blog.skillacademy.com/fakta-menarik-wfh-work-from-home-yang-menjadi-pilihan-di-masa-pandemi>
- [8] F. Sandi, *Catat! Pekerja yang WFH Tetap Wajib Digaji Perusahaan* [Internet], 2021.[cited on 2021 Sept 4]. Available from : <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20210816124919-4-268768/catat-pekerja-yang-wfh-tetap-wajib-digaji-perusahaan>
- [9] D. Ma'rifah, *Implementasi Work From Home : Kajian Tentang Dampak Positif, Dampak Negatif dan Produktivitas Pegawai* [Internet], 2020. [Cited on 2021 Sept 4]. Available from : <https://jurnal.bkn.go.id/index.php/asn/article/view/281>
- [10] R.D. Sihaloho, and S. Hotlin, *Pengaruh Lingkungan Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Karyawan Pada PT. Super Setia Sagita Medan* [Internet], 2020. [cited on 2021 Sept 4]. Available from : <http://jurnal.darmaagung.ac.id/index.php/socio/artic le/view/413>
- [11] L. Lestary, and Harmon. *Pengaruh Lingkungan Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Karyawan* [Internet], 2018. [cited on 2021 Sept 4]. Available from : <https://jurnal.polban.ac.id/index.php/an/article/view/937>