

Identification of Work Stress, Work Motivation, and Counseling Service Needs as a Recommendation for Counseling Program Development at PT X

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Abstract: This research aims to identify the levels of work stress, work motivation, and the need for counseling services at PT X, to provide a basis for the development of an effective Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collected quantitative data via an online survey of 90 employees and qualitative data through in-depth interviews with a staff member and a company psychologist. The quantitative results show that the majority of employees have a moderate level of work stress (58.89%) and high work motivation (66.67%). However, a significant finding is that almost all respondents (98.89%) expressed a need for counseling services, whether at a moderate or high level. This finding indicates that high work motivation cannot completely eliminate the negative effects of work stress. Further qualitative analysis identified the main barriers to utilizing counseling services, namely a lack of service dissemination, concerns about confidentiality, and the stigma associated with mental health.

Keywords: Work Stress, Work Motivation, Counseling Services, Employee Wellbeing, Employee Assistance Program

1 INTRODUCTION

In the modern business landscape, employees are seen as strategic assets that determine a company's growth and success. Companies that invest in human resource development tend to gain a competitive advantage in the market, whereas those that focus solely on physical and financial capital often face failure (ar & Pathak, 2023). Therefore, maintaining employee well-being is an essential aspect, not limited to physical health but also psychological health, which plays a role in supporting optimal performance. Research shows that work stress has a negative impact on an individual's psychological well-being (Leonardi & Astuti, 2023). Factors such as excessive workload, long working hours, and low autonomy are consistently identified as major triggers of stress (Putra et al., 2023). The negative impact of stress not only lowers performance but also extends to individual and company levels, affecting mental health and overall productivity (Prastyo, 2025). Meanwhile, work motivation is viewed as a protective variable that can mitigate the negative effects of stress while also increasing productivity (Kurniati & Mulyani, 2025). However, high work motivation is not yet a comprehensive solution for employees' psychological well-being. Therefore, counseling services or Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are needed to help employees manage work pressure, maintain mental health, and support the company's sustainable growth.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is defined by the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) as a professional service designed to enhance and maintain productivity while creating a healthy workplace, with core services consisting of short-term counseling provided free of charge by licensed therapists (Attridge, 2023). Workplace counseling has been proven effective in helping employees overcome personal and work-related problems (Firdhayanti & Djoekardi, 2021). Nevertheless, the implementation of EAPs in Indonesia is not yet optimal due to low utilization rates and strong cultural stigma. A study in Southeast Asia found that only 29.04% of employees were aware of EAPs, with an even lower figure in Indonesia, at only 25% (Fadzila & Ong, 2025). Additionally, the stigma associated with mental health remains a significant barrier, as it creates a sense of shame and reluctance for individuals to seek help (Hartini et al., 2018). Based on these issues, this study aims to identify the level of work stress, work motivation, and the need for employee counseling services, as well as to produce relevant findings as a basis for strategic recommendations for the effective development of EAPs to support psychological well-being and increase sustainable productivity.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Approach and Design

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of work stress, work motivation, and the need for counseling services at PT X. This approach was chosen because qualitative data provides in-depth insight into employee experiences, while quantitative data offers statistical validation.

Research Subjects

The subjects for the quantitative study were 90 PT X employees who participated in an online survey. The majority of respondents were young employees (26-35 years old) with 1-5 years of work experience. The subjects for the qualitative study included a staff member and a company psychologist. The interview with the staff member aimed to explore their personal experiences and perceptions of workload, emotional barriers, and the use of psychological services. The interview with the company psychologist was conducted to support the findings and highlight the diverse psychological issues and treatment barriers that exist. The sampling procedure used in this study was voluntary sampling.

Measurement Instruments

Quantitative data was collected using three main instruments:

1. Job Stress Scale (JSS): This was used to measure job stress levels. The scale, adapted into Indonesian by Umillah and Etikariena (2018), was used with permission. Developed by Shukla and Srivastava (2016), it consists of four dimensions: job stress (9 items), role expectation conflict (5 items), coworker support (4 items), and work-life balance (4 items). The JSS has a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.833, with 19 items passing the validity test. An example item is: "I have a lot of work and feel worried because I have very little time to do it."
2. Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS): This was used to measure work motivation. The scale, adapted into Indonesian by Umillah and Etikariena (2018), was also used with permission. Developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), it consists of four dimensions: Intrinsic Motivation, Introjection Regulation, Identification Regulation, and External Regulation. The MAWS questionnaire has a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.881, and all its items passed the validity test. An example item is: "I really enjoy my job."
3. Counseling Service Needs Scale: This was developed in-house by the authors and reviewed by a company psychologist and a supervising lecturer. An example item is: "I believe counseling services are important for improving employees' psychological well-being."

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics based on low, moderate, and high categories, according to the theory of hypothetical statistics (Azwar, 1993). Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. This method aims to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes emerging from the qualitative data. In this study, the interview themes focused on identifying issues contributing to work stress, such as difficulty managing emotions and excessive workload. Additionally, the analysis highlighted barriers to using counseling services.

3 RESULTS

Interviews with staff and the company psychologist identified several key issues contributing to work stress and barriers to utilizing counseling services. Common complaints included difficulty managing emotions, excessive workload, and poor communication with superiors. A crucial finding was the lack of company socialization regarding psychological services, which was reinforced by a staff member's admission that they only learned about the company psychologist after working for three years. Furthermore, concerns about confidentiality and negative stigma were also primary reasons why employees were reluctant to seek help. The company psychologist also acknowledged the limited number of professional counselors and the low level of mental health literacy among employees. The psychologist emphasized the need for education, socialization, and the presence of professional counselors with a system that guarantees confidentiality to create a mentally healthy work environment.

To support the qualitative findings, quantitative data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed to 90 employees at PT X. The demographic data of the respondents are as follows:

Table 3.1 Respondents' Gender	
Gender	Frequency
Male	46
Female	44
Total	90

Table 3.2 Respondents' Age	
Age Group	Frequency
Under/ 25 years	17
26-35 years	55
36-45 years	15
46-55 years	3
Total	90

Table 3.3 Respondents' Length of Employment

Length of Employment	Frequency
1-5 years	62
6-10 years	15
11-15 years	11
15-20 years	2
Total	90

Table 3.4 Respondents' Job Positions	
Position	Frequency
Non-Staff	31
Assistant/ Staff	48
Assistant Manager	6
Manager	5
Total	90

The results of the Work Stress, Work Motivation, and Counseling Service Needs identification are as follows:

Table 3.5 Distribution of Work Stress Levels of Employees at PT X

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Low	33	36.67%
Moderate	53	58.89%
High	4	4.44%
Total	90	100%

The majority of employees fall into the moderate work stress category, while only a small percentage experience high work stress.

Table 3.6 Distribution of Work Motivation Levels of Employees at PT X

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Low	2	2.22%
Moderate	28	31.11%
High	60	66.67%
Total	90	100%

The majority of employees have high work motivation, with very few at a low level.

Table 3.7 Distribution of Counseling Service Needs Levels of Employees at PT X

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Low	1	1.11%
Moderate	45	50.00%
High	44	48.89%
Total	90	100%

Almost all respondents (98.89%) feel a need for counseling services, whether at a moderate or high level, with only one person feeling a low need for counseling.

The quantitative results confirm the qualitative findings, showing an urgent need for counseling services. Although the majority of employees have high work motivation, the survey results indicate that their stress levels are also significant (moderate). This demonstrates that strong motivation does not entirely eliminate the negative effects of work stress. This finding reinforces that counseling services are not only necessary to address existing problems but also serve as a preventive measure to maintain employees' psychological well-being. The barriers identified through interviews, such as a lack of socialization and stigma, directly explain why the need for counseling services is so high, even if services may already exist, as employees are unaware of them or feel uncomfortable using them.

4 DISCUSSIONS

This study at PT X, using a mixed-methods approach, aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of work stress, work motivation, and the need for counseling services. Quantitative data was collected through an online survey of 90 employees for statistical validation, while qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews with a staff member and a company psychologist to gain a deeper perspective on employees' experiences and perceptions. The findings indicate a coexistence of moderate work stress (58.89%), relatively high work motivation (66.67%), and an almost universal need for counseling services (98.89%). These results suggest that the phenomenon cannot be explained by a simple model that assumes high motivation automatically eliminates the negative impacts of work stress; instead, it requires a more complex theoretical framework for adequate analysis.

In this context, the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model is a relevant theoretical framework to explain these findings more comprehensively. The JD-R Model classifies job characteristics into two main categories: job demands and job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job demands refer to physical, psychological, or social aspects that require sustained effort and have the potential to cause psychological or physiological consequences, such as excessive workload, time pressure, and emotional demands. Conversely, job resources are aspects that support the achievement of work goals, reduce the burden of demands, or promote personal growth. The JD-R Model also explains two different psychological processes: the health impairment process, where high chronic job demands can deplete physical and mental energy, leading to burnout and health problems, and the motivational process, where adequate job resources can trigger motivation, increase work engagement, and support employee performance and loyalty (Demerouti et al., 2001).

The findings at PT X can be understood through this JD-R framework. Qualitative data revealed high job demands, such as "excessive workload" and "difficulty managing emotions," which align with the health impairment process, leading to moderate work stress levels in the majority of employees. At the same time, the high level of work motivation indicates the presence of strong job resources, although the research document does not specify the underlying factors. This high motivation may reflect factors such as career development opportunities, work autonomy, or mutual support among colleagues. The coexistence of moderate work stress and high motivation is not a contradiction but a theoretically consistent condition. The JD-R Model states that when both demands and resources are high, a significant level of strain can occur alongside high motivation (Demerouti et al., 2001). Thus, PT X employees can be understood as individuals who remain motivated due to adequate job resources but are also vulnerable to stress due to high job demands.

This situation shows that work motivation has its limits in reducing the negative impact of stress. The fact that almost all employees (98.89%) expressed a need for counseling services shows that motivation alone is not a sufficient, comprehensive solution for sustained psychological pressure. The need for counseling reflects employees' internal awareness that external support is required to maintain psychological balance and prevent a future decline in motivation. Therefore, counseling services should be positioned not just as a reactive response to existing problems, but also as a preventive strategy to maintain employee mental health. However, the study also found a significant gap between the high need for counseling and the low utilization of available services. In-depth interviews identified several major barriers: stigma related to mental health, a lack of socialization about the service, and concerns about confidentiality. Stigma creates reluctance for employees to seek help for fear of being negatively perceived by colleagues and management. The lack of socialization is evident from a staff member's statement that they only became aware of the company psychologist after three years of employment, which aligns with the low awareness of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) in Indonesia. Concerns about confidentiality are also a significant barrier, as employees worry that information shared in counseling could impact performance evaluations or job security. These barriers cause counseling services, even if available, to be underutilized.

This situation shows that simply providing counseling services is not enough; companies need to actively remove the barriers that limit employee access to them. Recommended strategies include: (1) ensuring absolute confidentiality through partnerships with external EAP providers and repeated communication of the policy; (2) conducting proactive and continuous socialization through multi-channel educational campaigns and integrating service information into new

employee orientation; and (3) embedding counseling services into the company culture so they are seen as part of an employee welfare and development program, not just a problem-solving tool (Tummers & Bakker, 2021).

Despite the important contributions of this study, several limitations should be noted. First, the use of voluntary sampling could introduce selection bias, as employees who are more motivated or experiencing higher stress may be more likely to participate. Second, the quantitative sample size is relatively small (N = 90), making it difficult to generalize the results to the broader company population or other companies in different industries. Third, the qualitative data only involved two participants, so the insights gained are limited and potentially anecdotal. To address these limitations, future research should be conducted with a larger sample size and random sampling methods to improve external validity. Additionally, using focus group discussions with employees from various departments and job levels would enrich the understanding of barriers to counseling service use and employee expectations for such programs.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study conducted at PT X, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding employee well-being. This research found that the majority of employees have a moderate level of work stress. Although they also have high work motivation, this is not enough to completely overcome the negative effects of work stress. This finding shows that counseling services are essential and urgently needed by almost all employees (98.89%). Counseling is necessary to help employees manage stress, maintain motivation, and improve overall psychological well-being. However, the study also found significant barriers that prevent employees from using potentially available counseling services, including a lack of socialization, concerns about confidentiality, and the stigma around mental health. Therefore, simply providing a service is not enough. Companies must actively address these barriers to ensure that counseling services can be optimally accessed and utilized by employees.

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