



STRESS COPING BEHAVIOR OF WORKERS LAYOFFS DURING THE COVID-19 LIVING IN BABALAN DISTRICT, LANGKAT REGENCY

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Abstract

This study aims to examine in depth about the stress coping behavior of workers who experience job cuts (layoffs) during COVID-19. This research uses a qualitative approach with case study methods. Selection of location and research subjects using purposeful sampling techniques. The subjects numbered three people, namely workers who experienced job cuts (layoffs) during the COVID-19 period who lived in Securai Village babalan district of Langkat regency. The data collection methods in this study used interviews, observations and documentation. The data analysis techniques used are data collection, data reduction, data display, and inference. The study also used all three triangulation of resources, technique, and time. The results of the Depression Anxiety Stress Disorder (DASS 42) questionnaire showed that all three subjects experienced mild stress with an assessment of roughly 18. The stress experienced by the three subjects in the form of sadness, upset, anxious, confused and discouraged when experiencing job cuts (layoffs). The results showed that all three subjects did the coping process, the first initial assessment, secondary assessment, and reassessment and decision. This aims to find out the cause of the problem that occurs, then the three subjects do stress coping. The three subjects used both forms of stress coping, namely problem focused of coping and emotion focused of coping. This can facilitate the process of handling the source of the problem that causes stress. As for a new findings from all three research subjects, the concept of self that affects coping stress is physical, social, moral and psychological.

Keywords: coping stress, COVID-19, worker experienced job cuts (layoffs)



PRELIMINARY

At the beginning of 2020, the world was shocked by a virus, namely a new type of corona virus (SARS-CoV-2) and the disease was coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The origin of this virus came from Wuhan, China (ILO, 2020). According to Handayani (2020) Indonesia reported a case of the corona virus on March 2, 2020, it is suspected that the cause of the virus was contracted from foreigners who visited Indonesia. In Indonesia, this case is increasing until March 29, 2020 there are 1,115 cases with deaths reaching 102 people and the highest death rate is 9% (Yuliana, 2020). Furthermore, on March 31, 2020 there were 1,528 cases with 136 deaths and 81 people recovered (CNN Indonesia).

During the COVID-19 period that is happening in Indonesia, the government has implemented a large-scale social restriction (PSBB) policy (PP No. 21/2020). The existence of this policy made the socio-economic activities of the community experience changes, such as limited transportation, shopping centers and recreational areas were closed, so that the income of workers experienced a drastic

decline (Muhyiddin, 2020). It can be seen from preliminary research (ILO, 2020), that there are 25 million jobs in the world experiencing a decline. This results in workers or workers losing their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, in the second period of 2020, the International Labor Organization predicts the working hours of all workers or workers will decrease by 10.5 percent or equivalent to 305 million full-time workers or about 48 hours per week (ILO, 2020).

Work is a common and significant thing that humans do in various cultures, namely to meet physical needs in living life (Anshori, 2013). Some needs can be achieved through work, where individuals will earn money while working. With money, individuals can meet their daily needs (Anshori, 2013).

From this COVID-19 incident, many workers experienced layoffs (PHK) and a decrease in the income of workers/employees/employees in Indonesia (Ngadi, Meilianna, & Purba, 2020). Termination of employment (PHK) is the termination of a job that causes a loss of livelihood (Rani, 2020). It is known that the



percentage of layoffs (PHK) in Indonesia based on data from the LIPI Population Research Center together with the Demographic Institute of the University of Indonesia (LD-UI) and the Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of Manpower (Ngadi, Meilianna, & Purba, 2020) at the end of April 2020 is 15.6% consisting of 1.8% termination of employment (PHK) with severance pay and 13.8% termination of employment (PHK) without severance pay. Termination of employment (PHK) without severance pay is a form of violation of Law no. 13 of 2003 related to employment. Therefore, the government needs to supervise companies in each region. With the Circular Letter (SE) of the Minister of Manpower Number M/3/HK.04/III/2020 concerning the Protection of Workers/Labourers and Business Continuity in the Context of Prevention and Control of COVID-19, the Governor is asked to implement wage protection for workers/laborers as well as the continuity of their work. effort (Ngadi, Meilianna, & Purba, 2020). From the event of termination of employment (PHK) during the COVID-19 period experienced by workers, it can trigger stress (Muslim, 2020). 04/III/2020 concerning Protection of Workers/Labourers

and Business Continuity in the Context of Prevention and Control of COVID-19, the Governor is asked to implement wage protection for workers/labor and business continuity (Ngadi, Meilianna, & Purba, 2020). From the event of termination of employment (PHK) during the COVID-19 period experienced by workers, it can trigger stress (Muslim, 2020). 04/III/2020 concerning Protection of Workers/Labourers and Business Continuity in the Context of Prevention and Control of COVID-19, the Governor is asked to implement wage protection for workers/labor and business continuity (Ngadi, Meilianna, & Purba, 2020). From the event of termination of employment (PHK) during the COVID-19 period experienced by workers, it can trigger stress (Muslim, 2020).

Stress is something that disturbs the body and mind because of internal demands, both physiological and psychological aspects that make the individual's condition burdened and threatened (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This condition is being felt by workers who have experienced layoffs (PHK). According to Muslim (2020), during the COVID-19 period, individuals experienced stress due to the company terminating employment (PHK) which resulted in loss of income.



Basically, individuals will do something to get out of the problems that cause stress, the action is called stress coping (Musradinur, 2016). Coping stress is an effort both cognitive and behavioral in overcoming conditions that are not good or slumped with the aim of managing the demands of the external and internal environment so that they return to safe conditions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Based on previous research conducted by Aza, Wahyuni and Ekawati (2017) at KRMT Wongsonegoro Hospital Semarang, most of the employees carried out activities related to the Problem focused of coping strategy, namely looking for ways to solve problems by asking people who were considered more expert and looking through references. books or the internet and try to make an effort to avoid problems. Furthermore, only a few employees carried out emotional focused coping strategy activities in the form of seeking social support, doing fun things to avoid problems, managing emotions, being sincere and doing religious activities.

In this study, the Sumatra region was the location of choice for researchers. It is known that Sumatra is in the third rank where

workers or laborers experienced layoffs (PHK) during the COVID-19 period with a percentage of 21.1% layoffs (PHK) (Ngadi, Meilianna, & Purba, 2020). Furthermore, based on information (CNN Indonesia) the impact of the corona virus caused 14,000 workers in Sumatra to experience layoffs (PHK). From the data obtained, the researcher minimized the location that became the focus of research, namely in Babalan District, Langkat Regency. It is known that the population is 60,675 people and 19 workers/laborers (BPSKL, 2020). At this location, researchers obtained strong information about workers who were laid off during the COVID-19 period, namely as many as 12 workers who lost their jobs. Workers who experience termination of employment are original residents or indeed domiciled in the Location.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study design, because the researcher wants to see a case from data sources regarding the stress coping of workers who experienced layoffs during the COVID-19 period. The case study design is detailed, detailed, intense and in-depth and is more directed as an effort to examine problems or unique phenomena that are contemporary (limited by time)



(Herdiansyah, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Researchers discussed the stress coping behavior of workers who were laid off during the COVID-19 period. Put forward by Lazarus & Folkman (1984), coping with stress is the individual's way of overcoming problems that cause the individual to experience stress. Before the researcher knew the coping process of the three subjects, the researcher gave the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS 42) questionnaire which aims to see the level of stress felt by the subject when experiencing termination of employment (PHK) during the COVID-19 period. The results of the questionnaire show that subject N gets a score of 16, subject L is 18, and subject S gets a score of 17. From this score, it states that the subject is experiencing mild stress.

Based on the results of the study, the three subjects who experienced mild stress carried out the four coping processes. According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984) the coping process consists of primary appraisal, secondary appraisal, reassessment and decisions. Coping process aims to find out the causes of problems that occur so that

individuals are able to manage or develop strategies according to their problems (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This is in accordance with the research conducted by Yusa (2021) that those who experience problems have carried out the four coping processes, so that the problems experienced are resolved.

The first process is primary appraisal, where the three subjects felt distrustful when they were laid off during the COVID-19 period, so that the three subjects experienced stress in the form of sadness, anger, confusion, worry, disappointment, and lack of enthusiasm. According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984) initial assessment aims to determine the meaning of the event being faced. This is supported by research by Yusa (2021), that those experiencing stress during the COVID-19 period can have a negative impact on their psychological condition and cause anxiety, fear, emotional reactions, and negative feelings. Stress that occurs in individuals is caused by the many problems experienced in life (Musradinur, 2016).

Furthermore, the second coping process is secondary assessment, where all subjects are able to overcome their problems and accept the risk of solving problems due to layoffs during the COVID-19 period by taking



various actions. According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984) secondary assessment contains the meaning of questions, such as whether a person is able to face pressure or challenging situations. The following is supported by Yusa's research (2021), that those who are experiencing problems during the covid period have been looking for solutions to problem solving and using appropriate problem solving strategies.

The above is also supported by the research of Sawitri & Wideasavitri (2021), that those who are experiencing problems in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic can take action to reduce and overcome problems that cause stress and try to develop strategies for problems well.

The results showed that the actions taken by the three subjects were asking why the company was laying off workers, looking for work, using the final salary and savings, and asking for family support. In addition, subjects N and S also need the help of the closest people to get a job. With social support, both from family and closest people, it can help or alleviate the problems being faced (Astuti & Hartati, 2013). Meanwhile, subject L is just trying to get a job on his own. According to Sa'diyah (2017) that every

individual is able to direct and control himself in thinking and acting.

Then the third coping process is reappraisal or reassessment of a pressure that leads to the use of forms of stress coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1948). Before the individual leads to the decision taken, there is also a process of consideration of an option (Anwar, 2014). After considering the whole subject decided to use two forms of stress coping, namely problem focused coping and emotional focused coping, the goal is to solve the problem that is a source of pressure.

According to Lazarus & Folkman (1948), problem focused coping and emotional focused coping can be used at the same time, thus facilitating the process of handling the source of problems that cause stress. This is also supported by research by Rizkiyah & Apsari (2019), that those who have problems use two forms of coping, namely problem focused coping and emotional focused coping.

According to Lazarus & Folkman (1948), problem focused coping is solving the problems being faced by developing appropriate strategies, and emotional focused coping is a form of coping to relieve individual



emotions that arise due to problems without changing the conditions that are the source of the problem.

Subjects N and S use the first form of coping, namely problem focused coping, where N and S solve the problems they are facing. This is in accordance with problem focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1948) namely solving the problems being faced by developing strategies. This is also supported by the research of Sawitri & Wideasavitri (2021) that those who experience problems use problem focused coping, namely solving problems by finding a way out, and needing parental support.

The following actions are reflected by subjects N and S, that both of them have thought of ways to solve the problem properly, namely asking their superiors for the reason for the layoffs, returning to their villages, using savings and final salaries, looking for work, parental support, and needing help from the closest people. The method taken is the result of consideration of a choice that according to the individual is the best (Anwar, 2014). This is supported by the research of Sawitri & Wideasavitri (2021) that those who experience problems have resolved their problems with consideration and support

from the closest people, so that the problems experienced are really resolved.

In subject L, it was found that L solved the problems due to the COVID-19 period by asking why the company had laid off, returned to the village, used savings and final salary, looked for work, and asked for family support. This is the third coping process, namely reassessment of a stress in a way that is taken (Lazarus & Folkman, 1948). The following is supported by research by Cholilah, et al (2020), that those who experience problems can overcome their problems so that the problems experienced are reduced and resolved appropriately. This is also supported by the research of Yusa (2021), that those who experience problems are able to solve problems with a sincere feeling and remain grateful to experience the calamity given by Allah SWT, so that the subject only surrenders to Allah.

Coping The second method used by N is emotional focused of coping, which is a form of coping to relieve individual emotions that arise due to problems without changing the conditions that are the source of the problem (Lazarus & Folkman, 1948), where N accepts the company's decision to lay off, accepts the situation sincerely, thinks positively. , do not forget to pray to Allah, and do not



communicate with colleagues first. This is supported by the research of Sawitri & Widiasavitri (2021) that those who experience problems use emotional focused coping, namely reducing stress experienced by diverting to problems.

Furthermore, the second coping used by L, namely the emotional focused of coping Lazarus & Folkman (1948) is reducing emotions that arise from problems such as trying to accept problems sincerely, optimistically, and not forgetting to pray for help from Allah. The following is supported by research by Cholilah, et al (2020), that those who have problems using emotional focused coping are reducing or overcoming stress due to problems that occur, addressing problems steadfastly and sincerely.

Then subject S used the second form of stress coping, namely emotional focused on coping Lazarus & Folkman (1948), which was reducing emotions that arise from problems by accepting the situation, thinking positively, not communicating with co-workers first, and always remembering Allah SWT. . The following is supported by Yusa's research (2021), that those who experience problems use emotional focused coping, namely reducing stress with sincere feelings and

remaining grateful for experiencing the calamity given by Allah SWT, so that individuals only rely on them.

CONCLUSION

This study discusses the stress coping behavior of workers who experienced layoffs (PHK) during the COVID-19 period living in Securai, Babalan District, Langkat Regency. The subjects in this study were 3 (three) people, who experienced layoffs (PHK) during the COVID-19 period and lived in Securai Village, Babalan District, Langkat Regency. The results of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS 42,) questionnaire showed that the three subjects who were laid off during the COVID-19 period experienced mild stress.

Based on the results of the study, the three subjects carried out the four coping processes, namely primary appraisal (initial assessment), secondary assessment, reassessment or decisions that lead to the use of forms of stress coping. It aims to find out the causes of the problems that occur so that individuals are able to manage or develop strategies according to their problems. The results also showed that the three subjects used 2 forms of coping, namely problem focused coping and emotional focused coping. It aims to



simplify the process of handling the source of the problem that causes stress.

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