

CORRELATION OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS WITH WORK STRESS IN CALL CENTER AGENTS

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ABSTRACT

A call center job in the service industry requires providing the best client service possible. Call Center agents experience a variety of potential sources of stress in the course of performing their duties. This study tries to discover whether there is a connection between individual characteristics and workplace stress. This type of analytic observational study with a cross-sectional design with a population of 187 people with a sample of 45 people using simple random sampling at call center agents at PT. Infomedia Humanika Surabaya. Secondary data from company profiles and primary data from preliminary studies and questionnaires using the Depression Anxiety and Stress Scales instrument are utilized to collect the data. (DASS-42). Using the cross-tabulation analysis method, the de Vaus contingency coefficient is subsequently utilized to interpret the data. There is severe work stress of 51.1% for most workers, the relationship between gender and work stress is moderate (0.407), the relationship between age and work stress is moderate (0.588), the relationship between education level and low work stress (0.175), the relationship between marital status and low work stress (0.395). There is a moderate correlation between gender, age, and work stress, whereas the correlation between education level, marital status, and work stress is low.

Keywords : *Call Center Agents, Individual Characteristics, Work Stress*

ABSTRAK

Call center merupakan pekerjaan dalam bidang layanan yang dituntut untuk memberikan pelayanan sebaik mungkin bagi pelanggan. Agen call Center dalam menjalankan tugas menghadapi berbagai hal yang dapat menyebabkan stress. Penelitian ini untuk mengetahui ada tidaknya hubungan antara karakteristik individu dengan stress kerja. Jenis penelitian observasional analitik dengan rancang bangun cross sectional dengan populasi sebanyak 187 orang dengan sampel penelitian sejumlah 45 orang menggunakan simple random sampling pada agen call center di PT. Infomedia Humanika Surabaya. metode pengumpulan data adalah data sekunder diperoleh dari profil perusahaan dan data primer menggunakan hasil studi pendahuluan. Kuesioner menggunakan instrumen Depression Anxiety and Stress Scales (DASS-42). Menggunakan metode analisis tabulasi silang kemudian diinterpretasikan menggunakan koefisien kontingensi de Vaus. Adanya Stress kerja berat sebesar 51,1% pada sebagian besar pekerja, hubungan jenis kelamin dengan stress kerja bersifat sedang (0,407), hubungan usia dengan stress kerja sedang (0,588), hubungan tingkat pendidikan dengan stress kerja rendah(0,175), hubungan status perkawinan dengan stress kerja rendah (0,395). Ada korelasi sedang antara jenis kelamin dan usia dengan stress kerja, sedangkan tingkat pendidikan dan status perkawinan dengan stress kerja memiliki korelasi rendah.

Kata Kunci : *Agen Call Center, Karakteristik Individu, Stres Kerja*

BACKGROUND

Every worker has the right to get protection both in terms of occupational health and safety, this is in accordance with Law No. 1 of 1970, so it is necessary to protect against the dangers that exist in the company (UU No. 1 of 1970).

One of them is a call center agent who is a field of work that cannot escape the danger factor. Call centers are the company's front line, so they must provide the highest customer service possible. A call center agent's primary responsibility is to provide customers with

information and services and make decisions regarding their complaints. However, each of the customers has different characteristics or traits, some are patient, and some are receptive to information, very critical, and emotional, and not infrequently, there are those who criticize (Untari and Faizal, 2019).

In the workforce, psychological considerations are one of the factors that should be considered. Work stress is one of the potential dangers caused (International Labor Organization, 2013). Call center agents primarily responsible for providing information and assistance and resolving client concerns may experience work stress. (Untari and Faizal, 2019). Work stress is considered a threat that can affect workforce performance. Even though the company wants profitability to be maintained and the goals of the company or organization to be carried out properly (Jalagat, 2017).

The issue of work stress is currently a global problem that affects all types of jobs and workers in developed and developing countries. According to the world health organization (WHO), around 450 million people worldwide experience mental and behavioral disorders related to work stress, which will significantly threaten human health by 2020 (Makhbul et al., 2013). The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that the costs incurred by the company due to work stress exceed 200 million dollars per year. These costs include payment of salaries during illness, inpatient care, and outpatient care at the hospital, as well as costs due to decreased worker productivity (Greenberg JS, 2017 in Erdius, 2017).

The company will record conversations between a call center agent and a customer. This indicator is employed to evaluate the performance of each call center agent. The company produces a standard language that every agent must master. The call center agent ensures that representatives maintain professionalism and formality. Having to be able to suppress emotions and not being allowed to provoke customers' emotions is an obligation (Untari and Faizal, 2019).

Several factors can cause work stress that threatens the company's profitability. (Tarwaka, 2014). Internal factors include the role of work organizations within the company, work relations between employees, and career development. This study does not explain external factors the company identifies that affect the work environment.

Consumer service providers in Surabaya strive to give consumers comprehensive support. This organization provides at all times call center services. a. It is known that each workforce has different characteristics. An imbalance between job characteristics and a person's work capacity can lead to performance disturbances, one of which is work stress. Several studies also indicate a correlation between education and work stress (Abdurrahman and Sulaksmono, 2013) and that female employees are especially susceptible to experiencing work stress. (Krantz, Berntsson and Lundberg, 2005).

Quality Assurance and Training Connection (QATC) states that the annual turnover rate for call center agents in the United States reaches 66%. Meanwhile, in the UK, it is estimated that the costs for workers experiencing work stress are around 4 billion each year, while 13.5 million workdays are lost due to work stress (Health and Safety Executive, 2009). Reynolds (2015) determined that the average cost to replace a call center agent in the United States is \$6,000. This figure covers hiring, instruction, supervision time, and other expenses of becoming an expert. Due to the significant effects of work stress, additional research is required.

According to a preliminary study, agents in call centers complained of dizziness after doing work and emotional after working. The call center agent is exhausted from repeating activities and interacting with nasty consumers. There are psychological and physiological indicators of work stress, according to Robbins and Coulter (2018).

This study aims to analyze the relationship between individual characteristics and work stress among call center agents at PT Infomedia solusi Humanika Surabaya.

METHODS

This research utilizes a cross-sectional, analytic observational design to analyze the relationship between individual characteristics and work stress among call center agents at PT Infomedia Solusi Humanika Surabaya.

This study's population consisted of 187 call center agents in Surabaya, East Java, who provided customer service for a company unit. The sample of this research is a number of 45 people obtained through simple random sampling using the hypothesis test formula two proportions. This research was conducted from August 2020 to September 2020.

Individual characteristics and work-related stress are the focus of research in this company. The individual characteristics at issue are gender, age, level of education, and marital status. The Depression Anxiety and Stress Scales (DASS-42) instrument was used to measure the work stress variable—both utilized online distribution of questionnaires to respondents.

The analysis used to determine the strength of the relationship between variables uses cross-tabulation, which is then interpreted using the de Vaus contingency coefficient. This study has been granted an ethical certificate identifying the number 365/HRECC.FODM/VIII/2020.

RESULTS

Tables 1 through 6 indicate the association between individual variables (gender, age, marital status, and degree of education) and employee work stress. PT Infomedia Solusi Humanika Surabaya call center agents.

Individual Characteristics Gender

The distribution of call center agents by gender, as determined by research, as displayed in Table.

Table 1 Distribution of Company Call Center Agents by Gender in Surabaya's Customer Service Sector in 2020

Gender	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Male	23	51,1
Female	22	48,9
Total	45	100

According to Table 1, 51.1% of the 45 respondents were male, whereas 48.9% were female.

Age

Demonstrates the distribution of call center agents by age group according to the research results.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents by Age at Company Call Center Agents in the Customer Service Sector of Surabaya in 2020.

Age (Years)	Frekuensi	Persentase(%)
<26 Years	6	13,3
26 – 35 Years	35	77,8
>35 Years	4	8,9
Total	45	100

According to Table 2, 77.8% of the 45 respondents fell within the early adult age range

of 26 to 35 years. In contrast, only 8.9% of respondents were over the age of 35, which corresponds to the late adult age group.

Marital status

Table 3 displays the distribution of call center agents by marital status, as indicated by the study's findings.

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents based on Marital Status at Company Call Center Agents in the Surabaya Consumer service sector in 2020.

MaritalStatus	Frekuensi	Persentase(%)
Married	40	88,9
Unmarried	5	11,1
Total	45	100

According to Table 3, 88.9% of the 45 respondents were married, while 11.1% were single.

Level of education

Table 4 demonstrates the distribution of call center agents based on their most recent level of education, as determined by the research findings.

Table 4 Distribution of Respondents based on Education level at Company Call Center Agents in the Surabaya Customer Service Sector in 2020

Level of education	Frekuensi	Persentase(%)
Associate Degree (<i>D3</i>)	8	17,8
Bachelor Degree(<i>S1</i>)	37	82,2
Total	45	100

Table 4 reveals that, among the 45 respondents, 82.2% had a bachelor's degree, while 17.8% had a D3 degree.

Work Stress

Table 5 indicates the distribution of call center agents based on work stress, as determined by the research results.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents based on WorkStress in Company Field Call Center Agents Surabaya Consumer Service in 2020

Work Stress	Frekuensi	Persentase(%)
Without Stress	10	22,2
Light Stress	2	4,4
Moderate Stress	3	6,7
Severe Stress	7	15,6
Hefty Stress	23	51,1
Total	45	100

The majority of the 45 respondents, 51.1%, experienced extremely high levels of work stress, as shown in Table 5.

The Relationship between Individual Characteristics and Job Stress Relationship between Gender and Work Stress

Table 6 indicates that most male call center agents, or 39.1%, report incredibly high levels of work stress. 63.6 percent of female call center agents experienced extremely high levels of work stress. Therefore, it may be argued that female call center agents are more inclined to experience severe stress than their male counterparts. a contingency coefficient test result of 0.407 reveals a moderate association between gender and workplace stress.

Relationship between Age and Work Stress

Table 6 suggests that most call center agents under 26 experience severe work stress, precisely fifty percent. In contrast, 62.85% of call center agents aged 26 and 35 reported experiencing extreme work stress. The majority of those over the age of 35, however, experienced heavy work stress by 50%. Therefore, it can be concluded that call center agents between the ages of 26 and 35 experience significantly more stress than agents in other age groups. a contingency coefficient test of 0.588 indicates a moderate relationship between age and work stress.

Relationship between Education Level and Job Stress

Table 6 reveals that 62.5% of call center agents with a high school certificate or equivalent suffer incredibly high levels of work stress. In contrast, 48.7% of call center agents with a bachelor's degree experienced extreme work stress. Therefore, call center agents with a D3 graduate degree are more prone to extremely high levels of occupational stress.

Using a contingency coefficient test of 0.175, we can conclude that the association between education level and work stress is weaker than between marital status and work stress.

Table 6 indicates that 57.5% of married call center agents feel incredibly high levels of work stress. In contrast, unmarried contact center agents did not feel 40% of work stress. Therefore, married call center agents are more susceptible to intense work stress.

The contingency coefficient test results of 0.395 indicate a weak association between marital status and work stress.

Relationship between marital Status and workStress

Based on Table 6, it can be seen that those call center agents with married marital status experience burdensome work stress, namely 57.5%. Whereas call center agents with unmarried marital status didnt experience work stress of 40%. So call center agents with married status are more vulnerable to burdensome work stress.

The results of data analysis using a contingency coefficient test of 0.395 means that the relationship between marital statusand work stress is low.

Table 6. Relationship between individual characteristics and work stress in call center agents Surabaya customer service company in 2020

Individual Characteristics	Work Stress					Total	Contingency Coefficient
	Without stress	light stress	moderate stress	severe stress	hefty stress		
Gender							
Male	7 (30,4%)	2 (8,7%)	3 (13,1%)	2 (8,7%)	9 (39,1%)	23 (100%)	0,407
Female	3 (13,7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (22,7%)	14 (63,6%)	22 (100%)	
Total	10 (22,2%)	2 (4,4%)	3 (6,7%)	7 (15,6%)	23 (51,1%)	45 (100%)	
Age							
<26 Years	2 (33,3%)	1 (16,7%)	0 (0%)	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	6 (100%)	0,588
26-35 Years	8 (22,85%)	0 (0%)	3 (8,6%)	2 (5,7%)	22 (62,85%)	35 (100%)	

>35 Years	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	4 (100%)	
Total	10 (22,2%)	2 (4,4%)	3 (6,7%)	7 (15,6%)	23 (51,1%)	45 (100%)	
Maritalstatus							
Married	8 (20%)	1 (2,5%)	2 (5%)	6 (15%)	23 (57,5%)	40 (100%)	0,395
Unmarried	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	5 (100%)	
Total	10 (22,2%)	2 (4,4%)	3 (6,7%)	7 (15,6%)	23 (51,1%)	45 (100%)	
Level of education							
Associate Degree (D3)	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (12,5%)	5 (62,5%)	8 (100%)	0,175
Bachelor Degree (S1)	8 (21,6%)	2 (5,4%)	3 (8,1%)	6 (16,2%)	18 (48,7%)	37 (100%)	
Total	10 (22,2%)	2 (4,4%)	3 (6,7%)	7 (15,6%)	23 (51,1%)	45 (100%)	

DISCUSSION

Individual Characteristics

Gender

Men and women have different physical abilities or muscles. Women tend to be more tired, so they experience more work stress. In addition to this, women also experience more work stress. This is because the menstrual cycle experienced by women can affect their emotional condition. These unstable emotions affect his emotional state. These unstable emotions also exacerbate the work stress experienced by women. (Suma'mur 1994)

Based on gender, most of PT Infomedia Solusi Humanika Surabaya's call center agents are male. Recruiting workers at call center agents is the same for both men and women. However, the night shift system is dominated by male call center agents. Men tend to work well under pressure compared to women, so it is pretty challenging to feel stress and adapt quickly to their jobs (Krantz, Berntsson, and Lundberg, 2005). However, in employment, both women and men have the same roles and responsibilities, namely serving the community through call centers that have been provided with a total of 8 working hours (Situmeang, K. A., Heryana, A., Mustikawati, I. S., and Nabila, A., 2022).

Age

Individual stress tolerance and the sorts of disruptive stresses vary with age. Adults are better able to control stress than youngsters and old age.

The age of the call center agent in this study is calculated by subtracting the respondent's birth year from the day the data was gathered. This study divided age into three distinct categories: 26 years, 26-35 years, and over 35 years. Most call center agents are between the ages of 26 and 35. This age belongs to the productive age and the category of young adults, the era of a highly ambitious worker. (Ministry of Health, 2009).

Marital status

Based on the marital status of 45 PT Infomedia Solusi Humanika Surabaya call center agents, most call center agents are married. In recruiting workers, especially for call center

agents, there are no specific criteria in terms of marital status. Prospective call center agent workers who are married or unmarried have the same rights during recruitment. People who already have a family or are married tend to have more responsibility for their work (Putri, 2012).

Level of education

Education aims to develop and improve knowledge, personal comprehension, and experience. Increasingly, higher education facilitates initiative, broad thinking, and the identification of effective means to complete a task efficiently. (Setyawati, 2010). Education has a role to prevent stress at work. education possessed by each individual will lead to resilience and skills in dealing with work (Situmeang, K. A., Heryana, A., Mustikawati, I. S., and Nabila, A., 2022).

Education level was the last educational level of call center agents during this research. The level of education in this study was grouped into 2 categories, namely D3 and S1 graduates. The majority of respondents have an undergraduate education level. One of the things to look at in the recruitment process is the education level of prospective workers. This company's minimal education requirement for call center agents is a D3. The more a person's level of education, the greater their ability.

Work Stress

Stress is an individual's feedback effort towards the environment to survive due to a stimulus that demands an individual's physical or mental demands that are too excessive (Moorhead and Griffin, 2013). Therefore, work stress can be understood as a reaction of workers to excessive or stressful work-related environmental stimuli. Stress can occur from officers who are required to work activities to have the ability to understand through the five senses such as seeing, remembering, and hearing and this indicator is very important for call center officers to have. Even though the workload experienced by call center officers is high, it does not directly affect stress levels. This can happen because officers can adapt to work, receive training, and are always briefed before carrying out their duties (Situmeang, K. A., Heryana, A., Mustikawati, I. S., and Nabila, A., 2022).

This study measured job stress using the DASS-42 questionnaire, which classified work stress into five categories: no work stress, light work stress, moderate work stress, heavy work stress, and substantial work stress. According to the study, most respondents experienced significant work stress, while a minority experienced mild work stress. Call center agents who experience work stress can occur due to factors within the employee, individual roles within the organization, work relationship factors, unique improvements made to achieve career plans, work atmosphere factors, and organizational structure in the workplace as well as extrinsic factors (Tarwaka, 2014).

Based on the stress indicator scale, 14 (fourteen) questions are asked. The average call center agent experiences moderate stress, and what affects the most is the irritability that arises from trivial things that happen at work. The feeling of irritability experienced by call center agents is one of the psychological symptoms of work stress that is often found (Robbins and Coulter, 2018).

The Relationship between Individual Characteristics and Job Stress

Relationship between Gender and Work Stress

The survey indicated that 63.6% of women had severe work stress, compared to 39.1% of men. The contingency coefficient is 0.407, indicating a moderate link between gender and workplace stress. PT Infomedia Solusi Humanika Surabaya is seeking, regardless of gender, call center agent positions. Men and women have equal opportunities to apply for call center

agent positions.

Gender is not a measure of one's communication skills. Because what is needed is someone's ability to communicate well, analyze problems submitted by customers, and speed and accuracy in finding data. According to a study, female call center agents are more inclined to experience significant work stress than their male counterparts. According to the data analysis using the contingency coefficient, the association between gender and work stress is moderate.

According to the findings of Ansori and Martiana (2017), there is an association between gender and workplace stress. According to Besral and Widiyanti (2015), despite light physical exercise, female workers are eight times more likely than male workers to experience stress. Besides this, there are disparities in the responses of men and women when faced with specific challenges. The female brain has a negative perception of stress and conflict. There will be an increase in harmful hormones, creating tension, anxiety, and terror.

In contrast to men, in general, they enjoy conflict and competition. They assume that conflict or competition can provide a positive boost. So, in general, women experience stress more quickly than men (Brizendine, 2007).

In contrast, Lady, Susihono, and Muslihati (2017) argued that there was no correlation between gender and work stress. Women and men have equal opportunities to suffer work-related stress; hence there is no correlation between gender and work-related stress.

Relationship between Age and Work Stress

The percentage 62.85% of those aged 26- 35 experienced extremely high levels of work stress, the most significant percentage compared to 0% for those aged 25 and 25% for those aged >35. The contingency coefficient was 0.588, indicating a link between age and moderate occupational stress.

Beginning at 20, anyone can participate in the recruitment process for call center agents at the company. Anyone who meets the requirements may participate in the call center agent recruitment process. According to Zulkifli, Rahayu, and Akbar (2019), there is a correlation between age and work-related stress events. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health (2009), the age range of 26 to 35 years are classified as early adulthood. Early adulthood is a transition phase from youth; individuals must adjust to new life patterns and social expectations during this time. As is the case with earning a living through a job that corresponds to their ability. However, high expectations and the inability to adjust to the workplace at that age frequently result in professional stress. (Putri, 2019).

Relationship between Marital Status and Work Stress

The data indicate that married call center agents experience a more significant proportion of severe stress than their single counterparts. 57.5 percent of married call center agents experience significant stress, compared to zero percent of single agents. The contingency coefficient is 0.395, showing little association between marital status and occupational stress.

In addition to being a worker, a spouse has a dual role. A married man becomes the head of the family and the father of those who already has children. In contrast, a woman has the role of housewife and mother (if she already has children), which can result in high emotional pressure, which can cause stress (Yanto and Rejeki, 2017).

It is hard to be entirely free of family troubles, especially if one is married, but it is also impossible to be forced into constant family problems that might cause stress. (Anoraga and Suyati, 1995).

This study contradicts the findings of Olatunji and Mokuolu (2014), who found that married workers are likely to report less work stress than single workers. However,

Ratnasari (2009) research confirms that married people have a more considerable burden than single people. This research is because a married person considers not just his wants but also the requirements of his family. As a result, a married person tends to experience a higher stress level.

Relationship between Education Level and Job Stress

According to the data, the education level of D3 had a greater proportion of significant work stress than S1. 62.5 percent of call center agents with a D3 education level are educated, compared to 48.7 percent of those with an S1 education level. The contingency coefficient is 0.175, indicating a weak association between education level and workplace stress.

Based on the research results, most call center agents who experience weighty work stress have graduated from D3. According to Torres, Padilla, and Simo (2013) a person's critical and reasoning power is influenced by a person's level of education. The higher the level of education of an individual, the individual will be more capable of solving problems that arise. In addition, they are also considered capable of dealing with pressure or workload and adapting to their work to control stress. Torress et al. assume that a low level of education contributes significantly to work stress.

According to the contingency coefficient data analysis, the association between education level and work stress is weak but significant. According to the findings of this study and research conducted by Suci (2018), the association between education level and work stress is shallow. Through experience or training, job-related duties can be acquired via non-formal education.

CONCLUSION

According to research conducted on call center agents at PT Infomedia Solusi Humanika Surabaya, call center agents at PT Infomedia Humanika Surabaya experience high levels of work stress. The correlation between individual characteristics and work stress, including the relationship between gender and work stress, is moderate, as are the relationships between age and work stress, level of education, and marital status.

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