

THE ASSOCIATION OF QUALITATIVE JOB INSECURITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING (STUDY ON YOUNG ADULT EMPLOYEE IN DKI JAKARTA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC)

Deffany Nathalia¹, Elvina Afifah², Inez Girlasa Pangestika³, P. Tommy Y.S. Suyasa^{4*}

¹Faculty of Psychology, Tarumanagara University, Jakarta

²Faculty of Psychology, Tarumanagara University, Jakarta

³Faculty of Psychology, Tarumanagara University, Jakarta

⁴Faculty of Psychology, Tarumanagara University, Jakarta

Email: tommys@fpsi.untar.ac.id

**Corresponding author*

Submitted: July 2022, Revised: December 2022, Accepted: February 2023

ABSTRACT

Qualitative job insecurity is a threat to job features, including salary reduction that increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. We predict that qualitative job insecurity has a significant correlation with psychological well-being. This study examines the relationship between qualitative job insecurity and psychological well-being during a COVID-19 pandemic involving 490 participants. This study used quantitative research methods and used convenience sampling techniques to obtain participants. This study was conducted by distributing questionnaires via google form using psychological well-being measuring tools [13] which include 32 items and Multidimensional Job Insecurity Questionnaire [4] which include 10 items qualitative job insecurity. Results showed a significant relationship between qualitative job insecurity and psychological well-being. Qualitative job insecurity is negatively related to enthusiasm and comfort, also qualitative job insecurity is positively related to anxiety and depression.

Keywords: *Psychological well-being, qualitative job insecurity, employee, covid-19.*

1. PREFACE

Coronavirus Disease-19 (COVID-19) is a disease caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome-CoronaVirus-2 [1]. As of March 21, 2022, there were 5,967,182 total cases of COVID-19 with 5,609,945 recovered cases and 153,892 deaths [2].

To prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in Indonesia, President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, imposed social distancing [3]. Several employment sectors such as hotels, construction, aviation, and shopping centers experienced an increase in layoffs (PHK) and a reduction in salaries. The Central Bureau of Statistics recorded a decrease in labor wages of 1.75% from February 2020 to February 2021 [4]. Until August 2020 as many as 29.12 million people were affected by COVID-19 with 2.56 million people being laid off and 1.77 million people were not working because of COVID-19 [4]. The decrease in labor wages that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic increased by 3.78%. Another survey conducted by the Katadata Insight Center (KIC) showed that 53.3% of respondents experienced a decline in their financial condition.

The problems above are related to job insecurity. Job insecurity is a threat that employees feel about their work that can lead to helplessness. Job insecurity is divided into quantitative job insecurity which includes threats to the entire job and qualitative job insecurity which includes threats from job features [5-7]. Qualitative job insecurity is an important thing to pay attention to during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the increasing percentage of the decline in labor wages can pose a threat to employees that can affect employee welfare.

Callea et al. showed that qualitative job insecurity can affect psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is a condition when individuals are energetic, do not feel tired, satisfied with their work, and do not feel nervous or irritated. The higher the qualitative job insecurity, the lower the psychological well-being. When qualitative job insecurity is high, job satisfaction and vigor will decrease, and when qualitative job insecurity is high, emotional exhaustion and psychological symptoms will increase.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the author argues that qualitative job insecurity will increase because there are differences in the level of salary reductions and other job features before and after the pandemic. Based on data from BPS and BPPKK, employees in DKI Jakarta experienced a salary reduction of 37.6% [9]. Thus it can be assumed that the threat of salary reductions during the COVID-19 pandemic increase and have an impact on qualitative job insecurity.

Callea et al. [8] explains that there is a relationship between job insecurity and psychological well-being of employees in Italy. Callea et al. provide evidence regarding the quantitative and qualitative consequences of job insecurity on psychological well-being. However, the research was conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study did not use the same psychological well-being concept as Callea et al. The psychological well-being measurement tool used by Callea et al. does not clearly describe the relationship between dimensions of psychological well-being according to Warr. Therefore, the measuring instrument used in the study of Callea et al. is not based on Warr's concept of psychological well-being. The measurement of psychological well-being used in this study has been adapted to the concept of psychological well-being from Warr.

This study aims to determine the relationship between qualitative job insecurity and psychological well-being (enthusiasm, comfort, anxiety, and depression) among young adult employees in DKI Jakarta during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study provides the latest information on measuring qualitative job insecurity. As far as we know, the measurement of job insecurity is always mixed between quantitative and qualitative job insecurity.

Theoretical framework

The independent variable of this research is qualitative job insecurity. The dependent variable is psychological well-being (enthusiasm, comfort, anxiety, depression).

Job insecurity is a condition when individuals do not have control over their jobs. Job insecurity arises because of predictable threats and changes in the company. The changes that occur make employees feel helpless and feel threatened with losing their jobs or features of their job [5].

Hellgren et al. explained that job insecurity is an individual's reaction to uncertainty in their job. The uncertainty felt by the individual arises as a result of the company's efficiency. Job insecurity is one of the work stressors that causes a decrease in job satisfaction. Job insecurity can affect the psychological well-being and work attitude of employees so that job insecurity can have an influence on the effectiveness of the company. Job insecurity arises because of an unexpected situation that causes tension. This tension is influenced by the experiences and perceptions of employees so that the reactions generated will be different. Two dimensions of job insecurity, namely (a) quantitative job insecurity which refers to the threat of future job

and (b) qualitative job insecurity which refers to the threat of job features [7]. Qualitative job insecurity includes threats to salary, career opportunities, and potential loss of quality in work relationships.

Psychological well-being as a feeling of happiness and positive attitude towards oneself and the environment [11]. Psychological well-being is characterized by happiness and life satisfaction which are components of positive psychological functioning. This positive attitude is influenced by the development and self-realization of the individual.

Psychological well-being is an individual's feelings about his daily activities [12]. These feelings include satisfaction, happiness, anxiety, and worry. The concept of psychological well-being being criticized based on emerging issues to improve the measurement of psychological well-being in the context of work [10]. Measurement of psychological well-being in the context of work reflects positive and negative evaluations of the job. Psychological well-being according to Warr's [10] concept includes affective and cognitive aspects. Cognitive aspects in measuring psychological well-being arise because of perceptions, anticipations, or comparisons of perceived affective aspects. Psychological well-being into four dimensions, namely pleasure high activation (enthusiasm), pleasure low activation (comfort), displeasure high activation (anxiety), and displeasure low activation (depression) [10]. The enthusiasm dimension is characterized by glad and alert at work, comfort is characterized by the sluggish and comfortable feeling at work. The anxiety dimension is characterized by the alarmed and afraid, while the depression dimension is characterized by dejected and depressed feelings at work.

The role of qualitative job insecurity to psychological well-being

Qualitative job insecurity which refers to the threat to job features. Qualitative job insecurity includes threats to salary, career opportunities, and potential loss of quality in work relationships. Qualitative job insecurity has an impact on psychological well-being [8]. Qualitative job insecurity is one of the work stressors that causes tension in individuals which can be explained by transactional stress theory (TST) from Lazarus and Folkman [13]. TST explains that individuals will evaluate the perceived experience through primary and secondary appraisals. Primary appraisal is carried out to determine the impact of experience perceived on psychological well-being. Secondary appraisal is carried out to find out how to deal with existing threats. Employees resources can help control perceived threats with individual control. Employees who feel powerless to control the threat that exists can lead to tension. Emotional reactions that arise due to the tension felt by employees can affect psychological well-being.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a salary reduction policy as a company efficiency effort that could affect the financial condition of employees. Pay reduction policies can affect employee work behavior. TST states that the primary assessment is carried out by employees to evaluate existing events, namely the salary reduction policy. The secondary assessment is intended to determine the employee's ability to control the threat. Employees will try to use the resources at their disposal to control this threat. Employees' efforts to control this threat can cause tension because employees will try to use all the resources they have. The helplessness felt by employees continuously will result in the emergence of psychological reactions that cause employees to feel emotionally exhausted and reduce work effectiveness.

The threat of qualitative job insecurity that causes helplessness and tension can reduce the resources owned by employees. TST explains that the employee's coping aims to control the

threat felt by the employee. Employees who feel powerless to control this threat cause emotional exhaustion because employees are not able to carry out adaptive coping strategies. Employees' perceptions of the ability to cope with threats have an impact on the emotional reactions that arise.

H1: Qualitative job insecurity has a negative association with enthusiasm

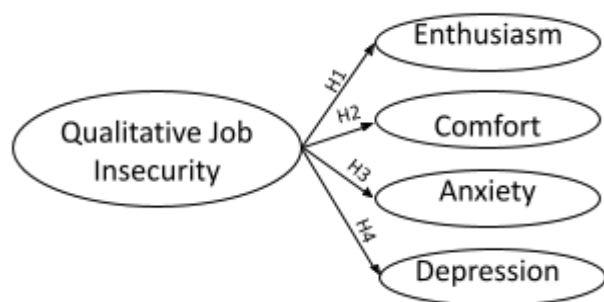
H2: Qualitative job insecurity has a negative association with comfort

H3: Qualitative job insecurity has a positive association with anxiety

H4: Qualitative job insecurity has a positive association with depression

Figure 1

Theoretical framework



2. RESEARCH METHODS

Procedures and participants

This study uses a non-experimental quantitative study method with a survey as a research data collection technique. The criteria for participants in this study are employees aged 20-40 years who work in DKI Jakarta. There were 490 participants consisting of 350 women (71.4%) and 140 men (28.6%). As regards to educational background, 126 (25.7%) participants completed senior high school, 67 (13.7%) participants completed associate degree, and 297 (60.6%) participants completed bachelor degree. The employment status of the participants in this study consisted of 241 (49.2%) contract employees and 249 (50.8%) permanent employees. Overall, the participants came from the manufacturing sector with a total of 154 (31.4%) participants. Meanwhile, the sector with the least number of occupations is in the research sector with 2 (0.4%) participants.

Measurements

Qualitative job insecurity was measured using the Multidimensional Job Insecurity Questionnaire (MJIQ) developed by Chirumbolo et al. in 2020 [14]. MJIQ measurement instrument consists of 10 items (e.g., “I feel that the career opportunities in my company are not favourable” and “I fear that my organization will not need my competencies anymore”). Responses were rated using a five-point likert scale. After testing the reliability of qualitative job insecurity, item number 7 was deleted. Cronbach's alpha value generated is 0.69, so this measurement instrument is reliable.

Psychological well-being was measured based on the concept of Warr Psychological Well-Being in 2012 [10]. This measuring tool has 32 items which are divided into four dimensions (enthusiasm, comfort, depression, and anxiety). Responses were rated using a six-point likert scale, 1 (never), 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (quite often), 5 (often), and 6 (always).

Enthusiasm has eight items that describe positive feelings and high mental activation of individuals in their work (e.g., "In the past few weeks, how often have you felt proud and grateful at work?" and "In the past few weeks, how often have you felt alert at work?"). Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$. In addition, the mean value is 4.70, and the std.deviation is 1.10.

Comfort has eight items that describe positive feelings and low mental activation of individuals in their work (e.g., "In the past few weeks, how often have you felt sluggish at work?" and "In the past few weeks, how often have you felt comfortable at work?"). Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$. In addition, the mean value is 4.33 and the std.deviation is 1.16.

Anxiety has eight items that describe negative feelings and high mental activation of individuals in their work (e.g., "In the past few weeks, how often have you been afraid at work?" and "In the past few weeks, how often did you feel alarmed at work?"). Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$. In addition, the mean value 2.84 and the std.deviation 0.98.

Depression has eight items that describe negative feelings and low mental activation of individuals in their work (e.g., "In the past few weeks, how often do you feel dejected at work?" and "In the past few weeks, how often have you felt depressed at work?"). Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$. In addition, the mean value 2.74 and the std.deviation 1.16.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the results of the normality test, qualitative job insecurity and each dimension of psychological well-being were not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the Spearman correlation test was used to examine the relationship between qualitative job insecurity and dimensions of psychological well-being.

In the calculation of spearman correlation conclude that qualitative job insecurity has a negative correlation with enthusiasm and comfort. Meanwhile, qualitative job insecurity has a positive correlation with anxiety and depression.

Qualitative job insecurity ($M = 2.67$ and $SD = 0.65$) had a negative relationship with enthusiasm ($M = 4.70$ and $SD = 0.98$), $r_s = -0.376$, $p = 0.000 < 0.005$. This means that the lower they perceive a threat at work, the more employees are proud of their work. Therefore, H1 is supported from the results of this study.

Qualitative job insecurity ($M = 2.67$ and $SD = 0.65$) had a negative relationship with comfort ($M = 4.33$ and $SD = 1.10$), $r_s = -0.400$, $p = 0.000 < 0.005$. This means that the lower they perceive a threat at work, the more they feel safe with their work. The results of this study support H2.

Qualitative job insecurity ($M = 2.67$ and $SD = 0.65$) had a positive relationship with anxiety ($M = 2.84$ and $SD = 1.13$), $r_s = 0.456$, $p = 0.000 < 0.005$. This shows that the higher they perceive a threat at work, the more employees feel anxious about their work. Therefore, H3 is supported by this study.

Qualitative job insecurity ($M = 2.67$ and $SD = 0.65$) had a positive relationship with depression ($M = 2.74$ and $SD = 1.16$), $r_s = 0.510$, $p = 0.000 < 0.005$. That the higher they perceive a threat at work, the more employees feel tired at work. It can be concluded that H4 is supported by the results of this study.

Table 1

Correlation test results of qualitative job insecurity and dimensions of psychological well-being

| Variabel | M (SD) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|---------|
| QLJI | 2.67 (0.65) | 1 | | | |
| Enthusiasm | 4.70 (0.98) | -0.376** | 1 | | |
| Comfort | 4.33 (1.10) | -0.400** | 0.725** | 1 | |
| Anxiety | 2.84 (1.13) | 0.456** | -0.398** | -0.533** | 1 |
| Depression | 2.74 (1.16) | 0.510** | -0.518** | -0.570** | 0.751** |

Note. N=490, *p<0.005, **p<0.01, QLJI = Qualitative Job Insecurity.

This study shows that during the COVID-19 pandemic, young adult employees are able to show enthusiasm and comfort in their working life to improve work effectiveness. In addition, the age of 20-40 years is the golden age to seek and gain a lot of experience and develop the ability to adapt, especially in the scope of work.

In current conditions, information about COVID-19 is easily accessible to young adults and can increase the anxiety level. The COVID-19 pandemic has put pressure on young adults, making them vulnerable to depression [15]. In addition, the increase in cases of layoffs, salary reductions, and efficiency actions taken by the company greatly affect the anxiety and depression level of young adult employees. The higher an individual's perception of the possibility of losing their job features, the more individuals will feel depressed and anxiety [16]. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that qualitative job insecurity is correlated with each dimension of psychological well-being. Qualitative job insecurity has a negative correlation with enthusiasm and comfort, and has a positive correlation with anxiety and depression. The results of this study are in line with previous studies [8]. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that all hypotheses in this study are accepted.

The results of this study provide novelty from previous research because this study uses the concept of psychological well-being which has been adapted directly from Warr due to the research of Callea et al. uses four different measuring tools to measure psychological well-being. This study can explain the association of qualitative job insecurity and enthusiasm, comfort, anxiety, and depression felt by employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study provides a novelty in measuring the relationship between psychological well-being and qualitative job insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic which has been adapted to previous research suggestions which state that qualitative/quantitative job insecurity measurements need to be distinguished because the relationship between qualitative job insecurity and psychological well-being is more significant [8].

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The limitation of this study is the number of participants who are different from the research of Callea et al., this study consisted of 490 participants while the study of Callea et al. consisted of 751 participants. In addition, this research was conducted when the COVID-19 pandemic had lasted for approximately two years, so there was a possibility that the level of qualitative job insecurity felt by employees was decreasing.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by all parties who contributed to making this research possible.

REFERENCE

- A. Callea, A.L. Presti, S. Mauno, F. Urbini, The association of quantitative/qualitative job insecurity and well-being: The role of self-esteem, *International Journal of Stress Management*, 16(1) (2019) 46-56. DOI: 10.1037/str0000091
- A. Chirumbolo, F. Urbini, A. Callea, Dimensionality, reliability and validity of a multidimensional job insecurity questionnaire: Preliminary findings in the Italian context, *University of Rome*. 37(1) (2020) 35-46. DOI: 10.13133/1974-4854/16722
- Badan Pusat Statistik (2021, Mei 31). "Pengangguran terbuka menurut pendidikan tertinggi yang ditamatkan".
<https://www.bps.go.id/statictable/2009/04/16/972/pengangguran-terbuka-menurut-pendidikan-tertinggi-yang-ditamatkan-1986---2021.html>
- C.D. Ryff, Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), (1989) 1069–1081. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069
- J. Hellgren, M. Sverke, K. Isaksson, A two-dimensional approach to job insecurity: Consequences for employee attitudes and well-being, *European Journal-of-Work-and-Organizational-Psychology*.-8(2) (1999) 179-195. DOI:10.1080/135943299398311
- L. Greenhalgh, Z. Rosenblatt, Job insecurity: Toward conceptual clarity, *The Academy of Management Review*. 9(3) (1984) 438-448. DOI:10.2307/258284
- P. Warr, A study of psychological well-being, *British Journal of Psychology*. 69(1) (1978) 111-121. DOI: 10.1111/j.2044-8295.1978.tb01638.x
- P. Warr, How to think about and measure psychological well-being. *Research Methods in Occupational Health Psychology*. New York, 2012.
- R. Lazarus, S. Folkman, Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping. *European Journal of Personality*, 1(3) (1987). DOI: 10.1002/2Fper.2410010304
- R.A. Halim, V.A. Gozali, C. Laurenia, J. Eliana, S. Sharon, F.I.R. Dewi, Ways to cope depression during Covid-19 pandemic, in: *Proceedings of the 3rd Tarumanagara International Conference on the Applications of Social Sciences and Humanities (TICASH)*, Atlantis Press, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2021, pp. 1974-1977. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220404.323>
- R.M. Ngadi, A.P. Yanti, Dampak pandemi covid-19 terhadap phk dan pendapatan pekerja di Indonesia, *Jurnal Kependudukan Indonesia*, (2020) 43-48. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14203/jki.v0i0.576>
- S.J. Ashford, C. Lee, P. Bobko, Content, causes, and consequences of job insecurity: A theory-based measure and substantive test, *Academy of Management Journal*. 31(4) (1989) 803-829. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/256569>
- T. M. Purba, P. T. Y. S. Suyasa, Pengaruh rasa tidak aman bekerja terhadap subjective well-being dan kualitas tidur dengan job embeddedness sebagai moderator. *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora, dan Seni*, 3(1) (2019) 84-93.
- World Health Organization. (2020a). "Media statement on confirmed COVID-19 cases".-<https://www.who.int/indonesia/news/detail/02-03-2020-media-statement-on-covid-19>
- World Health Organization. (2020b). "Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation report-1".https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/searo/indonesia/covid19/who-indonesia-situation-report-1.pdf?sfvrsn=6be5b359_0
- World O Meter. (2022). "Total coronavirus cases in Indonesia".
<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/indonesia/>