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The Role of Self Leadership for Employees in Implementing Work From Home (WFH) During the COVID 19 Pandemic

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Abstract. This study aims at answering the questions of what obstacles experienced by employees who have to carry out Work From Home (WFH) and how employees apply Self Leadership in implementing WFH. This study is a qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and in a fluid atmosphere. In this study, interviews were conducted with 20 employees who had to work with the WFH system to obtain data whether employees were familiar with Self Leadership and whether they had implemented it during WFH. The researcher also conducted interviews with 2 HRD heads to see if every leader has already understood how to motivate their subordinates to have self-leadership. This study proves that self-leadership is very important for everyone who runs WFH. The WFH system where people have to work independently requires everyone to be able to organize themselves, motivate themselves and discipline themselves so that the tasks or work entrusted to them can be completed properly.

Keywords. Self Leadership, Work From Home, Covid 19 Pandemic

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic, which was never predicted before has had a lot of influence on changes in people's behaviour. The COVID-19 outbreak has made people more aware of the vulnerability of humans to disease. Therefore, healthy living behaviour will change for the better, by consuming a balanced healthy diet, exercising and sleeping regularly, checking health conditions more regularly, seeking trusted health insurance, maintaining cleanliness, and using tools or taking supplements to avoid infection disease. Healthy behaviour is not limited to physical health but also mental health.

In addition to healthy living behaviour, people's behaviour has also changed in the COVID-19 pandemic in the use of technology, especially digital technology. Digital technology for online communication, robotic technology, and non-contact based technology equipment are becoming as important as electricity, water, and even oxygen. The use of technology which was previously more as a support for secondary work or even recreation has turned into a main work facility.

The Indonesian government responded quickly in overcoming the drastic change in the situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic amid demands for achieving state revenue targets. One of the measures taken to control the spread of Covid-19 is the Work Form Home (WFH) and Work From Office (WFO) policies since March 2020 and are still being implemented. With the WFH policy, employees are required to maintain their integrity. Employees continue to

work even though they are not supervised by their superiors and the work is carried out properly and on time, especially with the support of internet-based official applications, so that the completion of work can be done anywhere and anytime. Although there are some jobs that cannot be completed using the official application facility, for example, they must be present at the office or have to carry out tasks outside the office / field assignments. In this case, the completion of the task must be carried out by implementing strict health protocols.

On the other hand, WFH's policy for those who disagree, of course, differs from the argument presented. With most people doing WFH, from an economic point of view it is very beneficial such as saving on transportation costs and the cost of lunch at the office. However, this also brings consequences in the form of more frequent communication with friends and superiors. The intensity of communication is not only voice messages but can also be related to data. This needs to be considered more deeply considering that the means of communication in each region are different, especially the network. Obstacles are not only from the subordinates side which is sometimes slow in responding to the leader's message, but also the collaboration process sometimes still faces communication challenges with other team members.

By working at home, you will often see the screen of your HP/PC monitor and/laptop, this can sometimes be stressful because you are haunted by work deadlines that demand punctuality while most of the supporting documents are in the office. The consequences of WFH make family time increase, but this has the consequence of longer working hours because during breaks the leader sometimes still asks about the progress of work that has not been completed. Besides that, boredom and loneliness because it has been a long time not seeing colleagues makes mental disturbances often due to the lack of interaction and collaboration processes that require face-to-face meetings.

WFH times like this generate pros and cons opinions in society. There are some people who say that they are more productive during WFH, but there are also those who say that they miss the office atmosphere and feel more productive when working in the office. Indeed, one of the benefits of WFH is having more time for quality time with family or developing hobbies. However, during WFH, it is not uncommon for distractions to appear that can slow down the progress of work in the office. Therefore, time management and self-leadership skills are needed in times like these.

Self-leadership is actually not a new concept in the discussion of organisational behaviour, but only emerged in the 1980s when Charles C. Manz and Henry P. Sims Jr. from the University of Pennsylvania published his works on self-leadership. According to Manz & Sims in 2001, individuals can release their need for leadership supervision through self-planning, self-direction, self-monitoring and self-control which will increase organisational effectiveness and the ability of organisational members to learn (Jackson, 2004: 37). From the descriptions and obstacles stated above when carrying out WFH, researchers are interested in exploring answers to the questions what obstacles experienced by employees who have to carry out WFH and how employees apply Self Leadership in implementing WFH.

This research will contribute to companies and government agencies that enforce WFH policies for their employees, and will also be beneficial for employees who have to work with the WFH system.

Literature Review

Definition of Work From Home

The term remote work first appeared in the book *The Human Use of Human Beings Cybernetics and Society* by Norbert Wiener in 1950 who used the term telework (a term that is

popular in Europe today) (Siddharta and Malika, 2016). Later in 1974, the term 'telecommute' was first used in a University of Southern California report which focused on a peak hour traffic reduction project funded by the National Science Foundation (Nilles, 1988).

The concept of working remotely began to get the attention of many parties at the end of the 20th century, accompanying the emergence of communication technology and personal computers. The term telecommuting or "telework" was increasingly recognized in the 80s when workers were given the opportunity to complete tasks from home rather than coming directly to the office (Potter, 2003). At that time, the application of telecommuting work (working remotely) was applied one day a week (Siha and Monroe, 2006).

In the same decade, pilot remote work programs began at various locations in the United States and by the 1990s many states, local governments, and companies had implemented remote working systems. Driven by the development of information technology and international business competition, more organisations are implementing remote work (Asgari, 2016).

A quick observation shows that understanding working remotely involves at least 4 (four) things, namely (i) choice of workplace, which refers to saving time/physical distance (tele); (ii) partial or total substitution of daily commuters; (iii) the intensity of remote work activities, which refers to the frequency and length of time; (iv) the availability of communication and information technology (Mungkasa, 2020).

According to Heathfield (2019) there are various work schemes including flexible work (flexible schedule), and telecommuting, of course apart from working full time to temporary work. Furthermore, working freely is interpreted as workers are allowed to work differently from conventional working hours so that workers can balance work and life. Working remotely (from home and/or other locations outside the office) is a flexible work arrangement that allows working away from the office all or part of the time (Mungkasa, 2020).

For leaders of companies/organisations, some of the obstacles that may arise include (i) some leaders have difficulty adjusting, especially for leaders who tend to lack confidence in their subordinates; (ii) in jobs that require a high intensity of group collaboration, it is necessary to arrange a meeting schedule which will be troublesome; (iii) types of work that require face-to-face meetings with customers only allow limited flexibility, it is not possible to be away from the office all the time. Meanwhile, when only some workers can work remotely, this will create a sense of injustice among workers; (iv) some workers cannot work without supervision (Mungkasa, 2020).

Definition of Self Leadership

According to Kadarusman (2012) leadership is divided into three, namely: (1) Self Leadership; (2) Team Leadership; and (3) Organisational Leadership. Self-Leadership is meant to lead yourself so you don't fail to live. Team leadership is defined as leading others. The leader is known as a team leader (group leader) who understands what his leadership responsibilities are, explores the conditions of his subordinates, is willing to immerse himself in the demands and consequences of the responsibilities he bears, and is committed to bringing each of his subordinates to explore their capacities to produce the highest achievements. Meanwhile, organisational leadership is seen in the context of an organisation led by an organisational leader who is able to understand the business breath of the company he leads, build a vision and mission of business development, willingness to merge with the demands and consequences of social responsibility, and a high commitment to make the company he leads as a bearer of blessings for the community at the local, national, and international levels.

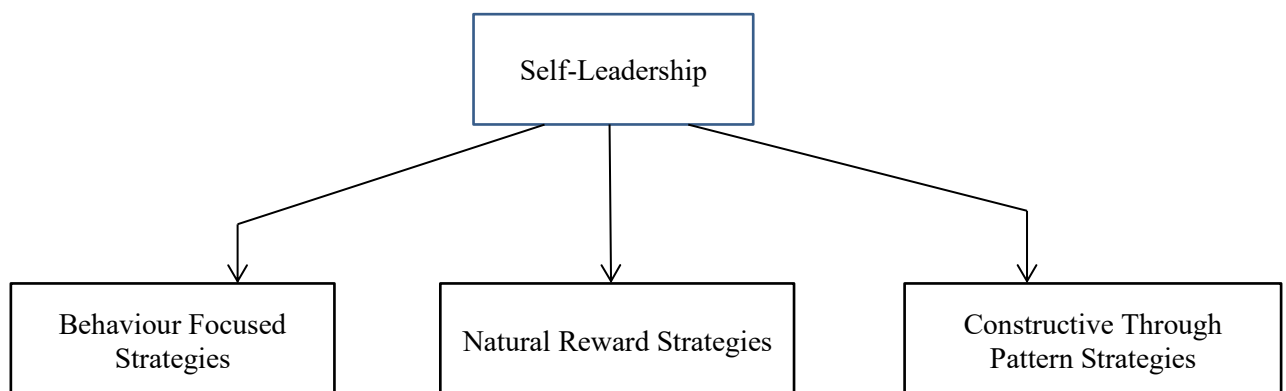
Curral and Marques-Quinteiro (2009:165) said that self-leadership is a psychological construct which is a person's capacity to increase performance through a repertoire of ongoing cognitive, motivational strategies and self-navigating behaviours. Being one of the traits or tendencies, self-leadership is the competence to guide oneself in challenging situations that prioritises the achievement of goals and proposes setting goals and striving goals. From a self-management perspective, self-leadership is based on the management of strategic objectives, explaining how and why. According to Curral and Marques-Quinteiro (2009:165) Self-leadership has three dimensions, namely behaviour focused strategies, natural self-reward strategies, and constructive though pattern strategies.

According to Rivai and Mulyadi (2003:58) Self-leadership is an extension of a strategy that focuses on behaviour, thought patterns, and feelings, which are used to influence oneself. Self-leadership can also be thought of as a form of following or perhaps more precisely self-focused leadership capable of limiting return to traditional following. Pearce and Manz in Sabir (2013:22) say Self-leadership is needed in organisations that require continuous innovation. Pearce and Manz in Sabir (2013: 22) also say that when employees are encouraged to guide themselves in defining problems, solving problems, making decisions, and identifying opportunities and challenges now or in the future, their creativity has been boosted.

According to Manz C.C et. al. (1990), self-leadership is the process of influencing oneself through an action that the person is capable of and achieves a self-direction and self-motivation needed to get the job done. Self-leadership is defined as an understanding of influencing oneself which tends to direct a person towards action in doing work that is naturally motivating. It can also be interpreted as an effort to direct someone to do work that is not wanted but must be done (Tabak et al., 2011).

Meanwhile, Manz and Neck in Curral and Marques-Quinteiro (2009:166) suggest 3 things related to self-leadership, namely (a) Behaviour Focused Strategies, (b) Natural Reward Strategies, and (c) Constructive through Pattern Strategies.

Figure 1
Self- Leadership



Source:

Manz dan Neck pada Curral dan Marques-Quinteiro (2009:166)

Manz and Neck in Curral and Marques-Quinteiro (2009:166) say that behaviour focused strategies are strategies to increase one's self-understanding about his performance while on duty, in order to adjust his actions to the goals of the task. The strategy can be through:

- (a) Self-observation is self-awareness and reflection about why and how specific behaviours impact individual, team or organisational performance, guiding individuals to suppress or promote such behaviour.
- (b) Self-setting of targets and goals, namely a set of behaviours that promote the adjustment of individual targets and goals to current performance to achieve the desired results.
- (c) Self-reward strategies, work vigorously that looks good to promote or inhibit performance behaviour through intangible or material rewards such as congratulating yourself or a weekend getaway in the mountains.
- (d) Self-punishment includes negative feedback mechanisms that seek to guide one's personal behaviour towards a desired goal by reducing unwanted or ineffective behaviour
- (e) Self-cueing is a personal guiding strategy that allows him not to forget the targets and goals and to achieve the desired level of performance.

Natural Self Reward Strategies

According to Curral and Marques-Quinteiro (2009:166) natural self-reward strategies are strategies for seeking pleasant feelings that are directly related to the task, aiming to energise the actions to be taken that can improve performance through positive task modelling and negative task suppression. Task positive modelling is a strategy that attempts to change job-related features in order to make them more attractive to individuals, making the task more enjoyable. Suppression of task negative issues can be considered an avoidance strategy because it directs one's attention only to the positive aspects of the job while ignoring the negative.

Constructive Thought Pattern Strategies

Curral and Marques-Quinteiro (2009:167) state that this is a strategy that better differentiates self-leadership from other competitor concepts (eg self-regulation, self-management). Through evaluation of one's values and beliefs, self-talk and self-mental imagery individuals develop and facilitate more constructive and adaptable patterns, minimising destructive thinking and ineffective thinking. Evaluation of one's values and beliefs is self-monitoring of how personal values and beliefs affect performance, and what changes are needed and made in order to adjust them to targets and goals to maximise performance. Self-talk is an individual who speaks to himself and develops better, to compare and understand the relationship between values, beliefs, goals and objectives.

Research Methodology

This is a qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. There is an interesting statement from Husserl relating to qualitative research and phenomenology. According to him, all qualitative research has a phenomenological aspect to it, but the phenomenological approach cannot be applied to all qualitative research (Padilla-Diaz: 2015). This phenomenology comes from the philosophy that surrounds human consciousness which was initiated by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) a German philosopher. Initially this theory was used in the social sciences. According to Husserl, there are several definitions of

phenomenology, namely: (1) subjective or phenomenological experience, and (2) a study of consciousness from the main perspective of a person.

Phenomenology is an approach started by Edmund Husserl and developed by Martin Heidegger to understand or study the experience of human life. This approach evolved a mature qualitative research method over the decades of the twentieth century. The general focus of this research is to examine the essence or structure of experience into human consciousness (Tuffour: 2017).

According to Alase (2017) phenomenology is a qualitative methodology that allows researchers to apply their subjectivity and interpersonal skills in the exploratory research process. The definition put forward by Creswell quoted by Eddles-Hirsch (2015) which states that qualitative research is a study that is interested in analysing and describing the experience of an individual phenomenon in the everyday world. In this study, the phenomenological approach is very appropriate because it can explain in detail the experiences of employees who work in private companies while carrying out Work From Home (WFH) during a pandemic that has lasted for more than 2 years.

Data collection of this research was obtained from in-depth interviews. Researchers chose semi-structured interviews because the interviews that took place referred to a series of open-ended questions. This method allows new questions to arise because of the answers given by the resource person so that during the session information mining can be carried out more deeply (Creswell, 2014). In this study, researchers interviewed 20 employees of private companies in Jakarta, who have for approximately 2 years worked from home and 2 HRD heads.

The data obtained from this in-depth interview were then analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). According to Smith quoted by Bayir and Lomas (2016) there are several stages in science, namely: (1) reading and re-reading, (2) initial noting, (3) developing emergent themes, (4) searching for connections across emergent themes, (5) moving the next cases, and (6) looking for patterns across cases.

Results

The results of interviews with 20 employees who have done work from home (WFH) are summarised in the table below.

Table 1
Results of interviews with 20 employees

No	WFH-related aspects	Responses from the informants
I.	Obstacles encountered at the start of running WFH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Unfavourable home atmosphere. Too crowded with children. (b) There are no co-workers to share information and others. (c) There is no supervisor to supervise so the work is not directed (d) There is no self-motivation to work well (e) There is no target to complete the work
II.	Implementation of Self Leadership	
A	Behaviour Focused Strategies	

1.	Self- Observation	(a) Doing self- reflection (b) Evaluating the positive things that have been done (c) Evaluating negative things that have been done (d) Exploring our potential (e) Look for our own strengths and weaknesses
2.	Self -setting of targets and goals	(a) In order to get a promotion (b) In order to get a bigger salary (c) To gain the trust of superiors (d) To improve performance
3.	Self- Reward Strategies	(a) Appreciate the results of one's own work (b) Finding free time to vacation with family (c) Buying good food (d) Buying something you have wanted for a long time
4.	Self- Punishment	(a) Even if you are WFH, don't procrastinate (b) Completing the work before the deadline (c) Doing the job well even though there is minimal supervision
5.	Self-Cueing	(a) Work more effectively (b) Coordination with colleagues or other departments better (c) Better communication with superiors and colleagues by optimising technology
B	Natural Self Reward Strategies	(a) Even if you are in a WFH condition, you can still try to make work fun (b) Try to organise yourself better (c) Manage time better (d) Encourage creativity
C	Constructive Through Pattern Strategies	(a) Eliminate negative thoughts (b) Motivate yourself by seeing the success to be achieved (c) Making family a motivation to work harder (d) Planning to buy something that has been a dream

Table 2
Results of interviews with 2 HRD heads

No	Aspects related to Leadership	Informants	Responses from informants
1.	The mechanism of WFH so that it runs effectively	A	Done at the beginning before employees start working from home (WFH)
		B	No verbal explanation was given in a meeting, but there is a written circular

2.	Motivation to subordinates so that they can keep being enthusiastic about WFH	A	Conducted by HRD leaders and greatly affects employee psychological matters
		B	The Head of Section never gives motivation, even more often checks work and gets angry if the work done by employees is considered not as expected.
3.	Supervision to subordinates so that their work can be monitored	A	It is carried out by the division leadership regularly and when employees are getting bored with WFH, the leaders will provide more motivation so that employee morale will increase again
		B	Supervision is carried out too often by the leader, so it seems that the leader does not trust his subordinates

Discussion

From the results of interviews with 20 employees who run Work From Home (WFH), data is obtained that self-leadership is needed by people who must work with minimum supervision.

“When the company first introduced WFH, I didn't know how I was supposed to do my job. Especially at home, the atmosphere was not very conducive with 3 little children. At first, I really got into trouble because there were no colleagues and boss, so I worked like I wasn't directed. Coupled with the atmosphere in my house that is not conducive and too crowded. However, having been given a briefing and motivation by my superior regarding self-leadership, I understood that the main capital to be successful in running WFH is to have self-leadership.” (TW- Finance Staff)

“Before the company enforced the WFH regulations for employees, my supervisor held a meeting to be attended by all staff of more than 300 people. We were given briefings and explanations on how the WFH mechanism worked. My supervisor also underlined that WFH can be successful if there is a strong commitment from each individual who runs it. Everyone must be able to self-regulate, must be able to motivate himself, and must be able to carry out good communication to coordinate with all parties even though they do not meet directly.” (AP- Marketing Staff)

This is in line with the statement of Manz et al., in Muckhtar and Lubis (2012) that self-leadership is very important for each individual because it can influence oneself through an action that the person is able to take and achieve a self-direction and self-motivation needed to complete the task. Self-leadership is even needed for everyone so as not to experience failure in life (Kadarusman, 2012; Rivai and Mulyadi, 2003:58).

Meanwhile, interviews with 2 HRD heads showed that not all leaders trust their staff. This is closely related to one's character. Thus working with the WFH system will stress him out and often contact his staff and ask about work. If the work done by the staff is considered

not to meet the criteria, then the leader tends to be angry rather than asking if his subordinates are having problems and provide assistance and motivation (Mungkasa, 2020).

Conclusion

From the analysis conducted in this study, it can be concluded that self-leadership is very important for everyone who runs Work From Home (WFH). The type of WFH where people have to work independently requires everyone to be able to organise themselves, motivate themselves and discipline themselves so that the tasks or work entrusted to them can be completed properly. This research also shows that not all leaders can run WFH well. This is proved by the fact that there are still leaders who find it difficult to give trust to their subordinates and do not like to motivate them but tend to prefer scolding. For further research, the researcher suggests that research related to self-leadership can be carried out with a different approach.

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