

Occupational Stress Due to Additional Tasks of Procurement of Goods and Services in Provincial Health Office, East Java, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Hospitals under the coordination of the Provincial Health Office do not have particular employees to manage the procurement of goods and services so that the task charged to the existing employee as an additional task. Among them, 56.25% were health workers, and 43.75% were non-health workers. Preliminary studies show that 100% of procurement officials in the Technical Implementation Unit (well known in Bahasa as Unit Pelaksana Teknis, UPT), Health Office, experience job stress and it potentially continuously occurred, specifically in the UPT of East Java Provincial Health Office as the locus of this research, if it not adequately controlled. Therefore, this study aims to understand and explore the sources of work stress on employees who concurrently become procurement officials in hospitals at the East Java Provincial Health Office. This study uses qualitative-approach and the data analyzed using content analysis. The study was held during April and May 2019 by collecting data from six people who met the inclusion criteria through in-depth interviews to understand the job stressors experienced by procurement officials. Job stress on procurement officials originates from workloads, role conflicts, unfit person jobs, stagnation of roles, and interpersonal demands. Furthermore, findings of the sources of work stress on procurement officials, can be considered as a strategy for organizational approaches.

Keywords: *job fit, job stress, role conflict, role stagnation, work-related stress, workload.*

Introduction

Nine hospitals under the supervision of the East Java Provincial Health Office did not have officials to procure goods and services. Consequently, procurement tasks charged as additional tasks to employees of each hospital. This additional task must be completed together with their primary task. Among them, 56.25% are health workers, and 43.75% are non-health workers.

Preliminary study conducted by measuring the stress level of the work of procurement officials in the UPT of the East Java Provincial Health Office. The results of the preliminary study show that 100% of procurement officials at the Health Office UPT experience job stress with variations in stress levels: very low (8.34%), low (41.66%), moderate (41.66%) and high (8.34%)¹.

Research on work stress on employees is essential to understand the sources of work stress. By understanding the sources of work stress, organizations can precisely determine stress control strategies. Thus, this study aims to explore and understand the sources of work stress on employees who concurrently become procurement officials in hospitals at the East Java Provincial Health Office. The findings in this study will make hospitals begin to consider the prevention of stress with an organizational approach rather than just individual oriented by increasing stress coping skills.

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Method

Research Design: This research is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach because they can produce descriptions of phenomena of additional assignments experienced by hospital employees will be a concern in this study. The qualitative approach in this study aims to explore the source of stress felt by employees.

Sample: This research involved 6 individuals who experienced the phenomenon of additional duties as procurement officials at least 1 (one) year. The informants of this study were considered to represent 9 (nine) hospitals in terms of the size of the budget and the specialization of the hospital.

Data Collection: The data collected through in-depth interviews using semi-structured interview guidelines (Table 1). Before the interview, informants asked for their willingness to sign an informed consent form. Open questions are used to allow participants to express their detailed experiences and perceptions. Informants were asked to disclose and explain their experiences and perceptions of work stress and asked further questions related to the answers given by them. The duration of each interview varies from 30 to 60 minutes until no new information identified.

Table 1: Interview Guideline

No.	Questions
1.	How far do you feel stressed in your work?
2.	What are the main causes of stress in your work environment?
3.	Please give me an example of a work situation that really stresses you out?
4.	Can you give me a comment on your experience in carrying out goods and services procurement, if you consider it a source of work stress?

Location and Duration of Research: The research was conducted at the hospital under the coordination of the East Java Provincial Health Office, from April to May 2019.

Data Analysis: The analysis step refers to Miles et al.² including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduced by making a summary by choosing the main things, focusing on important things, looking for themes and patterns, and discarding what is

considered unnecessary. The presentation of data is done using narration and directed so that the reduction data can be organized, arranged in a relationship pattern so that it is easy to understand, can be concluded to achieve the research objectives.

Results

From the results of in-depth interviews with procurement officials, several causes of stress can be identified, including workload, role conflict, unfit person jobs, role stagnation, and interpersonal demands.

Workload: The majority of procurement officials feel a high workload due to multiple positions held. One of the informants (A4) completed an additional and the main task at home to pursue a monthly deadline. Another informant (A6) claimed that additional work as procurement was very time-consuming, even though they also had to fulfill their primary duties in serving patients. Following are interview quotes that support:

“My main task is to serve patients. This procurement seems to be time-consuming. I have to meet the provider; eventually, the patient could be neglected.” (A6).

The workload feels increasingly heavy with the deadlines set. One informant (A4) claimed to be hunted to complete procurement tasks because of deadlines every month. If he does not meet the deadline, it will disrupt the service in the hospital. Following are interview quotes that support:

“Yes, I am hunted for deadlines every month. If I do not finish the job this month, I cannot order items for the following month.” (A4)

The workload of procurement officials is increasingly heavy with the variety of variants for each type of item purchased. The workload of procurement officials felt to be very high, as perceived by the informants as follows:

“My task is that all procurement starting from fuel, consumption, maintenance, medical devices, medicines, reagents.” (A3).

Some procurement officials feel a high workload because they do not have a staff who can help documenting all procurement activities. The following are excerpts of interviews that support:

“The workload that burdens me is typing procurement documents. I do not have the staff. That is why I feel that my time is being consumed a lot.” (A6).

Role Conflict: All informants stated that the procurement tasks took up almost all of their daily time compared to their primary tasks. The majority of them have difficulty dividing roles because they are required to carry out their primary duties, and it ultimately makes their workload more difficult because the main task cannot be abandoned.

Procurement work is work that cannot be postponed. If postponed, it will have an impact on the continuation of services in their agencies. Thus, the majority of them carry out procurement tasks every day, not their primary task. The following are the results of interviews that support:

“Every day I have to deal with the procurement process. Moreover, even then, I must always be in contact with drug partners. After that, I have to ask one by one in the budget section. Because they are interrelated.”(A5)

In their assessment of employee performance, procurement tasks are not listed in the main element, so that time-consuming work is not included in the performance assessment. They stated it impacted the acquisition of their remuneration benefits. The following are the results of interviews that support:

“ Additional tasks are more time-consuming than the main task. So that it affects the remuneration. “ (A5).

Person-Job Unfit: Procurement officials feel incompetent in carrying out procurement tasks because they did not have a health education background. It makes always anxious when there is an audit by the auditor regarding the specifications of the goods. The following are the results of interviews that support:

“Actually, I was unable to procure and could not enjoy work. Therefore I was afraid when an auditor arrived. I was faced with an auditor for two weeks. “(A3)

The failure factor of job fit ultimately made the majority of procurement officials intend to resign from procurement officials. Some of them have expressed their wishes to their leaders.

Role Stagnation: One informant (A3) claimed that he had been in the procurement office for six years and did not know when they would be replaced. For those who have become health workers such as (A4), he wants to immediately focus on pursuing their profession and feels that he is not developing if he continues to work in procurement. The following are excerpts of interviews that support:

“It has been three years, I want to get out of procurement but I cannot. Then I have never learned about my profession” (A4)

On average, those who are current procurement officials are already involved in the structure of the previous procurement manager. As previously stated (A4), they had tried to get out of the procurement manager but could not. The following interview supports:

“I have been a procurement officer for six years. There has never been rolling. Replace once a year. “(A3)

Interpersonal Demands: Stress is experienced because the relationship with co-workers occurs in the majority of procurement officials at the UPT Dinkes. Procurement officials have tried to explain the dual conditions of their positions, but procurement officials feel uncomfortable with other staff. As they feel the following:

“So sometimes I also clash with friends in the pharmacy. Even though the leadership has said that I am if I hold a position.” (A4)

Discussion

The management of the procurement of goods and services puts hospital staff into procurement officials with various stressors namely workload, role conflict, person job unfit, stagnation of roles, and interpersonal demands.

Job stress felt by procurement officials is influenced by the high workload in the procurement of goods and services. Quick et al.³ conclude that overloading work, time pressure, and changing tasks or activities is one of the most significant sources of work stress for people in many jobs and organizations. The high workload experienced by procurement officials is due to many things, among others: multiple positions held, deadlines for completion of work, types of procurement of goods and services that are very diverse and absence of procurement staff or assistants. Ilies et al.⁴ mentioned that the single most consistent factor associated with stress in the workplace is the amount of work, followed by the shadowing deadline. Incompatibility between the number of employees' needs and the number of jobs will increase the workload of employees because employees are forced to do multiple jobs so that they have the potential to cause stress⁵.

Procurement tasks prevent them from carrying out their primary tasks in a focused and maximal manner so that many jobs were neglected and they had not finished. This condition corresponds to a study that showed that work stress not only harms individuals but also harms the organization^{6,7}.

The role conflict affects the occurrence of stress on officials of the procurement of goods and services. These results correspond to the conclusions of Jin et al.,⁸ stating that role-conflict could increase work stress among Chinese correctional staff. Previous research shows that role stress reduction is associated with reduced overall job stress, and that work stress decreases, in turn, can be associated with higher job satisfaction⁹.

In addition to workload and role conflict, the person-job factor is unfit to influence work stress events in procurement officials. Person-job fit can be explained as employee perceptions of how well they fit or match their job position in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully perform the tasks expected of them^{10,11,12}. Deniz et al.¹³ revealed that paying attention to person-job fit and adjusting employees to organizations is an essential factor in reducing work stress. Procurement officials claim they do not understand the specifications of medical goods and services because they have no medical education background, which makes them always anxious when there is an audit by the auditor regarding the specifications of the goods. The gap between employment and educational background is stressful since inappropriate educational backgrounds can also lead to work stress⁵.

The majority of procurement officials claimed to intend to leave the procurement management structure at their UPT. These results are in line with Kristof's¹⁰ conclusion that person-job fit also influences job satisfaction and in turn, the commitment and intention of employees to leave their jobs. A research¹² confirms that the person-job fit has the most significant impact on employee turnover intentions.

Stagnation of roles also affects the incidence of stress on procurement officials. Pareek¹⁴ identifies the stagnation of roles as one of the conditions responsible for work stress. Pareek¹⁵ defines role stagnation as the feeling of being "trapped" in the same role as is the recognition of most procurement officials that they have tried to get out of the procurement tasks but cannot.

The stagnation of the role experienced is feared to have a negative impact in the future. Srivastava¹⁶, in his study, revealed that stress arising from role ambiguity and role stagnation is the most correlated with anxiety.

Interpersonal demands from coworkers also influence job stress events for procurement officials. Procurement officials experience stress because they are often required to carry out their primary tasks. These demands relate to the dual role experienced by procurement officials. This condition is in line with the statement of Quick et al.³ that stress due to interpersonal demands is somewhat broader and more personal than stress due to the demands of the role.

Limitation: This qualitative research has limitation. The limitation is the sample size representing a small number of procurement officials in Indonesia. So that the findings of this research could limit the generalization to other regions. Therefore, the results of this study must be interpreted with caution when applying them to procurement officials in other regions of Indonesia.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clarify that procurement officials have experienced work stress and need more attention from the supervisor and works stress prevention strategies required with an organizational approach. Recruitment or assignment of functional employees who specifically handle the procurement is an urgent matter to eliminate role conflict and role stagnation. The formation of a management team for the procurement in hospitals is expected to reduce workload. Technical competency training for procurement official can reduce the person job unfit. Understanding of the stressors faced by procurement officials in hospitals makes us think of developing strategies that are not only focused on increasing stress-coping skills on individuals but rather a more preventive organizational strategy.

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