

## The Role Of Income, ICT Adoption And Leisure Time In Maintaining Employee Mental Health

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### Abstract:

This study investigates the role of income, ICT adaptation, and leisure time on employees' mental health. This study uses quantitative methods by adapting qualitative methods of focus group techniques and deep interviews which are quantified so that quantitative data processing can be carried out. Focus groups are conducted to determine indicators that will be explored in-depth in deep interviews on a larger sample so that data is produced that is ready to be quantified. We focus on mental health assessments and look for indicators that affect mental health in the workplace. Based on the results of focus groups and in-depth interviews, we found 4 control factors including income (W), work-life balance (Wlb), job satisfaction (Js), free time (Ft), ICT adaptation (ICT). We use Corrected Standard Errors (CSE) estimation, feasible general least squares (FGLS), and two-step moment generalization method (Two-step GMM) in estimating the data we collect. We found that Income is not the only thing that makes employees happy and able to enjoy their lives and work optimally at work. This is evidenced by a causal relationship that is not significant to the mental health of employees. Job satisfaction that encourages employees to work around the clock is also not good for the benefit of workers' mental health. However, it is precisely the balance of life and work as well as free time that has a significant positive impact and it is an indicator that helps to measure the mental health of employees. ICT adoption surprisingly can improve the mental health of employees. It is rational where workers can work efficiently in their work with technology. This proves that free time and work-life balance are important factors in maintaining the mental health of employees.

**Keyword:** Income, ICT Adoption, Leisure Time, Employee Mental Health, Human Resource Management

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### Introduction

One of the main worries for employees during the Covid-19 epidemic is mental health. The Covid-19 epidemic has had an equal impact on every country (Rusmingsih, Widarni, & Bawono, 2021). Those days in March 2020 were very tough for all workers. They have to improvise space to be able to work at home without having to make peace between work and children. Workers are trying to telecommute for the sake of their mental health (Barn, Di Rosa, & Kallinikaki, 2021). Most workers choose remote work formats or a hybrid between the office and remote work (Babapour Chafi, Hultberg, & Bozic Yams, 2021). In the midst of a spike in timekeeping,

inflexibility is one of the factors affecting the mental health of workers. If flexible working hours are implemented effectively, not only is there a better reconciliation between professional and family life, but it can also help workers to organize themselves better and be more productive. In the midst of the time registration boom, inflexibility is one of the factors affecting mental health. But when proposing a labor flexibility policy, companies should be aware that it can be adopted in many ways. It is important that managers know the needs of their teams to ensure that flexible working conditions work for both employees and employers, without burdening organizational outcomes (Chung, 2020).

Flexible working hours are key to workers' mental health. But it's not the only factor that can create stress in the workplace and lead to mental health problems. Poor communication, low level of support for employees, or lack of clear and preventive policies on mental health are other conditions that can harm the mental health of employees. Mental disorders are the second most common health problem in companies. It is for this reason that more and more companies are taking steps to try to maintain and improve the mental health problems of their employees. Mental health and well-being are major challenges for human resource managers. Most of those responsible for HR do not have strategies to combat mental illness and prevent mental health. A mental health disorder strategy should begin by identifying the team's goals and needs to effectively fulfill their role within the company (Lott, 2020).

One of the factors that have the greatest influence on workers' mental health is the type of leadership exercised within the company and, as a consequence, the trust that teams have in their managers (Razak, Sarpan, & Ramlan, 2018). The biggest mistake many leaders make is called micromanagement, wanting to control every detail and giving too many control messages. Leaders who listen and engage their coworkers to create a psychologically safe environment and encourage happier, healthier teams where each member feels confident and responsible. It is important for managers to provide support and guidance to the team, but when necessary and without falling into micromanagement (Iodice, 2022). The way managers communicate is critical to being able to better connect with their teams, as a poor choice of messages or communication methods can result in complicated situations. For this reason, it is important to have a communication program that helps break down barriers associated with discussing issues that create tension. In this regard, ITC has an important role in improving the quality of communication (Roman et al., 2019).

Communication is definitely one of the skills that many managers try to improve. However, managers should be aware that they should also promote soft skills to better connect with their teams. Soft skills and communication workshops can help increase the efficiency of teams and managers as a whole (Maturro, Raschetti, & Fontán, 2019). Workspace configuration also has a direct influence on employees' mental health, and as companies increasingly take into account diverse and multicultural work teams, they should also consider multiple workspaces (Gritzka, MacIntyre, Dörfel, Baker-Blanc, & Calogiuri, 2020).

Forcing all of your team members to work in a noisy environment can make extroverts happy, but it can be mentally exhausting for introverts. Employers should consider workspace configurations when developing stress prevention and mental health policies. So, as most experts agree, time flexibility is crucial in promoting good mental health in workers, but it is not the only

factor to be taken into account, as communication, type of leadership or workspace are elements that can also help achieve this healthy organization. Another thing that needs to be an indicator in maintaining the mental health of employees is free time including free time and work-life balance. Companies must consider all these factors if they want the mental health of employees to be optimal and thus achieve greater productivity (Redeker, Caruso, Hashmi, Mullington, Grandner, & Morgenthaler, 2019). This study investigates the role of income, ICT adaptation, and leisure time on employees' mental health.

### **Literature Review**

In order to get the most performance out of their employees, businesses must today demonstrate a professional commitment to the care of all employees' mental health. Companies must commit to self-control and resilience. Companies must be innovative, looking for new ways to achieve results, flexible to understand employees and change when necessary, and with the ability to adapt to the world and society (Young, Kolcz, O'Sullivan, Ferrand, Fried, & Robinson, 2021).

The adoption of technology and personnel efficiency is still a long debate in this century. So human capital becomes an important thing that determines the quality of workers (Priyanto, Widarni, & Bawono, 2022). Companies must value not only the knowledge but also the experience of their workers so as not to damage the mental health of their workers. On the other hand, the leader must have good communication skills with his team, be able to work as a team, side by side with responsible staff, and have the sensitivity to identify people who are not good mentally or emotionally and, above all, know how to deal with situations (Yu, Park, & Hyun, 2021).

Companies must respect the conciliation of their workers. The workers saw their mental health threatened after the lack of respect from their superiors. Employees want as much free time as possible to spend with family and friends. Employees expect the company to offer benefits such as health, food, and development insurance. Others hope that their education and development can be improved so that they can continue to develop professionally. The modality of working at home has made it possible to point out some of the risks to the comprehensive health of people, because even though this has been considered an emergency strategy to stop the infection from spreading the virus in as much as possible in the organization. However, changes in the employee environment imply a transformation of the day and adaptation to work dynamics, as being hampered by contact with third parties, routines, family, and personal tasks, causes feelings of frustration, worry, boredom, and stress which are also associated with increased workloads and increased demands. personal resources to deal with it (Khan, Saeed, Zada, Ali, Contreras-Barraza, Salazar-Sepúlveda, & Vega-Muñoz, 2022).

Working at home it is possible to identify influences on a psychosocial level and for occupational development, due to the extreme flexibility of the workforce, low control over mediating personal and work life, and excessive use of Information Technology. The imbalance between skills and demands in the face of new workforce dynamics, little professional development, changing perception of time, and difficulty in making decisions (Davidescu, Apostu, Paul, & Casuneanu, 2020). Likewise, the perceived lack of work availability to carry out activities outside of working hours, which is associated with receiving information and overloading tasks through available communication channels, causing overwork or overload and low performance which increases the likelihood of experiencing stress-related symptoms,

tension, physical and mental exhaustion, anxiety, uncertainty, and insecurity. When COVID-19 was widespread, due to the fact that sudden changes in daily dynamics have implied a transformation in habits and lifestyles that affect leisure activities, healthy entertainment, and rest; was established as a basic principle for health care (Weder, Yarnold, Mertl, Hübner, Elmenreich, & Sposato, 2022).

In addition to the above, work-at-home modalities have contributed to an increase in the negative psychosocial effects of inappropriate use or use of ICT in the workplace. As a result, one of the effects associated with the use of new technology, which is part of techno-stress and is characterized by high levels of stress, anxiety, feelings of depression, and physical and cognitive fatigue that comes from a large amount of information abstracted from digital media where a person is exposed to in their work environment and beyond. This is a risk to labor security, especially occupational safety and health because the right to terminate employment and the risk of labor can be violated because it is not officially restricted or regulated in this modality (Vayre & Vonthron, 2019). Therefore, as a result of the evident changes in physical and mental health in populations worldwide, various studies have now been carried out aiming to investigate these variables. However, this has focused mainly on health sector personnel, as they are considered to be the population at greatest risk, due to the high probability of transmission. However, personnel assigned to other sectors of the labor market and business, who are similarly exposed to such changes, are susceptible to some health problems and risks, therefore, they need special attention (Bhaskara & Filimonau, 2021).

Psychosocial risk factors and aspects of preventing mental disorders in workers in the context of health emergencies due to COVID-19. Indeed, it is advisable to adopt actions in an organizational context that contribute to physical and cognitive well-being, such as physical activity, healthy eating, active rest and time management at personal, work, family and social levels. In this regard, it is important to address the perceived vulnerability of people's mental health and associated risks, thereby identifying beliefs about self-care from home work to establish benefits and barriers in implementing healthy lifestyle-oriented behaviors (Wang, Wen, Dong, Liu, & Cui, 2020).

### **Research Method**

This study uses quantitative methods by adapting qualitative methods of focus group techniques and deep interviews which are quantified so that quantitative data processing can be carried out. Focus groups are conducted to determine indicators that will be explored in-depth in deep interviews on a larger sample so that data is produced that is ready to be quantified.

We focus on mental health assessments and look for indicators that affect mental health in the workplace. Based on the results of focus groups and in-depth interviews, we found 4 control factors including income (W), work-life balance (Wlb), job satisfaction (Js), free time (Ft), ICT adaptation (ICT). So we can formulate the following equation:

$$MH_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 W_i + \beta_2 Wlb_i + \beta_3 Js_i + \beta_4 ICT_i + e_i$$

Where MH is mental health,  $\beta$  is a constant,  $i$  is an in-depth interviewee, and  $e$  is an error term.  $W$  is income,  $Wlb$  is work-life balance,  $Js$  is job satisfaction,  $Ft$  is free time,  $ICT$  is ICT adaptation. We conduct focus groups with 100 people online in 5 groups and various industries.

From the results of the focus group, we conducted deep interviews of 1200 people from various backgrounds. The data shown in table 1 will now be quantified.

Table 1. Variable Descriptions

Variable	Description	Unit analysis	Source
W	Montly income	USD Currently	focus group discussion
Wlb	work-life balance	work hour/ Free hour x 100%	focus group discussion
Js	job satisfaction	Percent (%)	focus group discussion
Ft	free time	Free hour/ 24 hour x 100%	focus group discussion
ICT	ICT adaptation and investment	USD Currently	focus group discussion

We use Corrected Standard Errors (CSE) estimation, feasible general least squares (FGLS), and two-step moment generalization method (Two-step GMM ) in estimating the data we collect.

### Result and Discussion

Stationary data is needed in testing, therefore it is necessary to test stationarity which is presented in table 2

Table 2. Stationary tests and cross-sectional dependence tests.

Variable in Level	Levin unit-root test	-Shin test (Zbar)	Variable in difference	Levin unit-root test	-Shin test (Zbar)
W	7.62***	0.07	W	75.12***	2.31***
Wlb	3.01***	1.07	Wlb	74.12***	3.71***
Js	5.41***	0.74	Js	8.11***	1.68***
Ft	5.62***	2.36	Ft	7.54***	3.27***
ICT	1.63***	2.27***	ICT	12.13***	2,87*
MH	3.58***	12.67***	MH	12.27***	3.72***

The cross-section is independent, which is the null hypothesis for the CD test. The P-value is close to zero, indicating that there is a cross-panel correlation in the data. The alternative hypothesis for the Im-Mesaran-Shin test is that at least one panel is stationary while the null hypothesis is that unit-roots are present in every panel. As indicated in table 3, we looked at the PCSE estimate, the FGLS estimate, and the two-step GMM estimate.

Table 3. Variable impact test results

Variable	CSE	FGLS	Two-step GMM
W	- 0.001 (0.005)	- 0.001 (0.004)	- 0.00 (0.003)
Wlb	0.02 (0.005) ***	0.01 (0.004) ***	- 0.01 (0.003) ***
Js	- 0.12 (0.028) ***	- 0.13 (0.016) ***	- 0.01 (0.003) ***
Ft	1.08 (0.003) ***	1.02 (0.012) ***	1.06 (0.012) ***
ICT	5.23 (0.506) ***	6.12 (1.201) ***	2.52 (1.812) *

Parentheses around standard errors. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

Based on the test results, it turns out that the amount of salary does not have a significant effect on mental health. However, the other four variables have a significant effect on the benefit of workers' mental health.

The results of the study are quite surprising where work wages or income do not have a significant effect on employee mental health and job satisfaction has a significant negative relationship. This is very surprising because job satisfaction is one of the indicators that increase work motivation and increase work. However, job satisfaction can backfire where employees can become workaholics and have a negative impact on employee mental health. Work-life balance is an important thing that needs to be maintained in maintaining the mental health of employees and also free time which is useful in releasing stress at work another surprising thing is the adoption of information technology which has a significant positive impact on the benefit of workers' mental health.

### Conclusion

Income is not the only thing that makes employees happy and able to enjoy their lives and work optimally at work. This is evidenced by a causal relationship that is not significant to the mental health of employees. Job satisfaction that encourages employees to work around the clock is also not good for the benefit of workers' mental health. However, it is precisely the balance of life and work as well as free time that has a significant positive impact and it is an indicator that helps to measure the mental health of employees. ITC adoption surprisingly can improve the mental health of employees. It is rational where workers can work efficiently in their work with technology. This proves that free time and work-life balance are important factors in maintaining the mental health of employees.

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