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Perbedaan Dukungan Sosial Teman Sebaya terhadap Individu Berkebutuhan Khusus di Sekolah Berbasis Inklusi Pada Jenjang Pendidikan (Ulifa Rahma)	428
Hubungan Religiusitas dan Persepsi Status Lajang Berkarir dengan <i>Psychological Well-Being</i> pada Wanita Lajang Berkarir (Jeanie Tanasya, Nanik, Listyo Yuwanto)	440
Hubungan antara <i>Self Efficacy</i> dan Persepsi Siswa pada Cara Mengajar Guru dengan Prestasi Belajar Matematika pada Siswa kelas 6 SD (Veronica Lita Hapsari)	450
Empati Disabilitas: Analisis Dukungan Sosial Teman Sebaya pada Remaja di SMP Inklusi (Yunita Kurniawati)	456
Analisis Keterampilan Kepemimpinan Dasar dengan Metode <i>Outbond</i> sebagai Faktor Pendukung Peningkatan Kualitas Hidup Remaja (MA. Primaningrum Dian Marthaningtyas)	462
<i>Employee Assistance Program</i> sebagai Salah Satu Intervensi untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas Kehidupan Kerja (<i>Quality of Work Life</i>) (Verina H. Secapramana)	468
Kecerdasan Moral Anak Usia Prasekolah Etnis Cina Ditinjau dari Gaya Pengasuhan Orangtua (MM. Shinta Pratiwi)	478
Intervensi Keterampilan Sosial pada Anak Berbakat Pra Sekolah (Made Dharmawan Rama Adhyatma)	489
Hubungan antara Harga Diri dengan Keterikatan Karyawan pada Pekerjaan: Studi pada Karyawan PT "IN" (Sufenliy, Devi Jatmika)	500
Studi Eksplorasi Rasa Marah pada Remaja Korban Perceraian Orangtua (Pretty Marsella, Naomi Soetikno, Samsunuwiyati Marat)	511
Pentingnya Dukungan Sosial terhadap Kesejahteraan Subjektif (Nurussakinah Daulay)	521
Pelatihan "Motivasi Sang Juara" dan Motivasi Belajar pada Siswa Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) (Ermida Simanjuntak)	531
Gambaran <i>Happiness</i> pada Penyandang Tuna Rungu yang Memiliki Anak Berpendengaran Normal (Dewi Ilma Antawati)	543

Employee Assistance Program sebagai Salah Satu Intervensi untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas Kehidupan Kerja (Quality of Work Life)

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Berbagai upaya masih terus dicari oleh pihak manajemen untuk meningkatkan kinerja dan produktivitas, mengingat unsur ini sangat penting perannya dalam dunia usaha. Kualitas kehidupan kerja merupakan suatu konsep yang luas cakupannya, termasuk kondisi kerja yang aman dan sehat, integrasi sosial dalam organisasi yang memungkinkan individu untuk mengembangkan dan menggunakan seluruh kapasitasnya. Kualitas Kehidupan Kerja merupakan salah satu alat yang efektif untuk mengelola kepentingan manajemen dan kepentingan karyawan, untuk mencapai tujuan yang dicanangkan organisasi, sekaligus melindungi hak dan martabat karyawannya. Dengan diterapkannya konsep Kualitas Kehidupan Kerja, diharapkan karyawan akan dapat merasakan kenyamanan dan keamanan dalam bekerja, serta keseimbangan dalam hidup, sehingga mampu bekerja secara lebih optimal, karena kesejahteraan hidup telah tercapai.

Upaya guna mengoperasionalkan konsep ini dapat dikatakan menjadi salah satu unsur dalam pengembangan dan perubahan organisasi (*organizational change*). Pengembangan dan perubahan yang terjadi dalam suatu organisasi membutuhkan perencanaan dan pengarahan, guna mencegah hal-hal yang tidak diinginkan dan mengoptimalkan target yang ingin dicapai. *Employee assistance program* ditawarkan sebagai salah satu bentuk intervensi yang akan membantu kelancaran proses tersebut.

Program ini merupakan bentuk fasilitas konseling perusahaan dan diterapkan pertama kali oleh Ford Motor Company pada tahun 1914 dengan penekanan pada masalah alkoholisme dalam industri. Dalam perkembangannya EAP telah beralih dari hanya sekadar permukaaan, menjadi jantung dari kehidupan organisasi. Sebagai konsep dan filosofi tentang kesehatan di tempat kerja, EAP dihubungkan dengan kinerja karyawan, praktek manajemen dan gaya kepemimpinan, pelatihan bagi supervisor, guna menunjang seluruh jajaran karyawan dan untuk pelatihan. Dengan demikian EAP merupakan salah satu bentuk intervensi terhadap perubahan organisasi, yang juga dapat membantu peningkatan kualitas kehidupan kerja (*Quality of Work Life*) dalam suatu organisasi.

Kata kunci : Quality of Work Life, Organizational Change, Intervensi, Employee Assistance Program

Employee Assistance Program as An Intervention to Improve The Quality of Work Life

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Various attempts are being sought by the management to improve performance and productivity, considering this element is very important in the business world. Quality of work life is a broaden perspective concept, including safe and healthy working conditions, social integration within the organization that allows individuals to develop and use the whole capacity. Quality Work Life is one of the effective tools to manage both the management and employee interests, to achieve the planned objectives of the organization, while protecting the rights and dignity of its employees. With the application of the concept of Quality of Life Work, employees are expected to be able to feel the comfort and safety at work, as well as balance in life, so that they can work more optimally, because welfare has been reached. Efforts to operationally apply this concept can be said to be one element in the organizational development. Development and changes that occur within an organization requires planning and direction, in order to prevent the unwanted effects and optimize targets to be achieved.

Employee assistance program is offered as a form of intervention that will be able to run the process well. This program is a type of counseling facilities and was first applied by the Ford Motor Company in 1914 with an emphasis on the problem of alcoholism in the industry at that time. For the time being the development of EAP has shifted from mere surface, to the heart of organizational life. As the concept and philosophy of health in the workplace, EAP linked to employee performance, management practices and leadership styles, training for supervisors, to support all employees and management. Thus EAP is one form of intervention to change the organization, which also can help to improve the Quality of Work Life in an organization.

Keywords: Quality of Work Life, Organizational Development, Intervention, Employee Assistance Program

Introduction

Various attempts are being sought by the management to improve performance and productivity, considering this element is very important in the business world. Productivity is one of three outcomes which is important for companies in the global era, namely: productivity, quality of work life, and profit. In general, productivity is defined as "a measure of the output of goods and services relative to the inputs of labor, capital, and equipment." (Cascio, 2003: 24). The more productive an industry, the better the competitive position because of the cost per unit is low. Productivity is the basic goal of all business organizations. As a country, our ability to make more money and enjoy a better standard of living depends on the improvement of productivity. Increasing productivity means doing things better with what we have. Increasing productivity does not mean working harder, but working smarter. The demands of the world today is that we are working with more limited resources - fewer people, less time, less space, and fewer overall resources. Increasing productivity is a step that inevitably should be done by the manager.

Talking about productivity in organizations in general can not be separated from the performance, which is defined as "the degree to the which employees Accomplish job requirements." (Milkovich & Boudreau, 2004: 185). The increasing popularity of the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) / Integrated Quality Management proposed by management theorist Deming W.Edwards a few years ago is a proof of the growing importance seen by the experts of management. Basically Deming proposed that the performance of an employee is more a function of such things as training, communications, equipment, and supervision rather than as a function of their own motivation. Performance management is a process which is also explicitly stated that in a competitive global industry environment today, any effort from employees should be focused like a laser which helped the company to achieve its strategic goals. In this case the use of an integrated approach to performance management to guide, develop, and reward also help efforts to improve the continuous improvement of employees.

Continuous improvement refers to the management philosophy that requires employees to continuously define and strive to meet the goals of quality, cost,

distribution, and availability goals with a higher standard. Continuous improvement means eliminating disposal in all areas, including due to excessive production, defective products, loss of time, transportation, processing fees, motion, and inventory. The main idea of this philosophy is that every employee must continuously improve their own personal performance, from one assessment period to another period. Performance management becoming important in this process, because as discussed earlier, the performance integrate the management goal setting, performance appraisal, and development into a common system which aimed to ensure that employee performance supports the company's strategic objectives, namely continuous improvement. The core of performance management is the emphasis that the employees efforts should be directed to the destination.

One of the efforts made by both organizations, as well as by the employees is to improve the quality of working life. Increasing the quality of work life is believed to be one of the effective ways to improve employee productivity and performance, which ultimately refers to organizational profit. Quality of work life is a broaden perspective concept, including safe and healthy working conditions, social integration within the organization that allows individuals to develop and use the whole capacity. Quality Work Life is one of the effective tools to manage both the management and employee interests, to achieve the planned objectives of the organization, while protecting the rights and dignity of its employees. With the application of the concept of Quality of Life Work, employees are expected to be able to feel the comfort and safety at work, as well as balance in life, so that they can work more optimally, because welfare has been reached. Efforts to operationally apply this concept can be said to be one element in the organizational development. Development and changes that occur within an organization requires planning and direction, in order to prevent the unwanted effects and optimize targets to be achieved.

Employee assistance program is offered as a form of intervention or counselling applied in the workplace that will enable the organization to run the process well. Introducing counselling into an organization carries implications for change.

This program is a type of counselling facilities and was first applied by the Ford Motor Company in 1914 with an emphasis on the problem of alcoholism in the industry

at that time. For the time being the development of EAP has shifted from mere surface, to the heart of organizational life. As the concept and philosophy of health in the workplace, EAP linked to employee performance, management practices and leadership styles, training for supervisors, to support all employees and management. Thus EAP is one form of intervention to change the organization, which also can help to improve the Quality of Work Life in an organization.

Quality of Work Life

The degree to which work are able to satisfy important personal basic needs through their experience in the organization gradually are increasing. What jobs offer, such as rewards, benefits, recognition, are no longer relevant nowadays. People need more than that. Personal spending practices, lifestyles, leisure activities, individual value systems, health can affect the workforce levels of need. If the work environment can fulfill employees' personal needs, there will be a positive interaction effect which lead to excellent QWL. As the rewards compensation, promotion, recognition, and development will meet workforce' expectation.

QWL is a complex, comprises physical and mental well being of employees. Quality of work life is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resource in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making valuable contribution and they should be treated with dignity and respect (Straw and Heckscher, 1984). As a construct quality of work life care for the welfare of employees, leading to job satisfaction as it outcomes, and includes the effects of the workplace on job satisfaction, satisfaction in life outside of the work area, and overall satisfaction in life, personal happiness and subjective well-being (Otto and Bourget , 2006, referring to Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel et al. 2001).

Discussion on quality of work life first performed in 1972 in an international conference in Los Angeles that was then recorded and edited by Louis Davis and Albert Cherns (in Wyatt and Rev. , 2001 , referring to Davis & Cherns , 1975) . At the moment there was a strong belief that work experience can also encourage the growth of positive attitudes and feelings on workers and establish a more humane society . Cherns (1978 ,

in and Rev. Wyatt , 2001) stated that the term quality of work life is a mix between a structural perspective and the perspective of system and organizational behavior on the one hand and the perspective of interpersonal relations , human relations , and supervision styles on the other . Note also the possibility that the Mills in 1978 include the term quality of work life in " the vocabulary of unions and management" (in Wyatt and Rev. , 2001 , referring to Mills , 1978) . Still according to Wyatt and Rev. (2001) concept of quality of work life has been well received in North America , Europe , and Japan as a managerial approach that rewards and giving greater concern to the democratization and humanization in the field of employment , including the acceptance of the view that the quality of work life , the productivity of labor becomes more increased . Quality of work life program is seen as " a movement toward greater engagement with the cooperation , knowledge , and tacit skills of the work force . " (Wyatt and Rev. , 2001 , referring to Thomson , 1983) . The existence of quality of work life and quality of the relationship between unions and management is an important factor for the success of the cooperation within the organization.

There are a lot of definition of QWL. Hackman and Oldhams (1980) defined Quality of work life as the interaction between work environment and personal needs. Beukema (1987) stated QWL as the degree to which employees are able to shape their jobs actively, in accordance with their options, interests and needs (the degree of power to design their work). According to Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger (1997) QWL is the feelings that employees have towards their jobs, colleagues and organization that ignite a chain leading to the organizations' growth and profitability (satisfying work environment). Lau, Wong, Chan and Law (2001) stated that QWL can be defined as the favourable working environment that supports and promotes satisfaction by providing employees with rewards, job security and career growth opportunities. Serey (2006) defined QWL as related to meaningful and satisfying work. It includes : a) an opportunity to exercise and situations that require independent initiative and self-direction b) an activity thought to be worthwhile by the individuals involved c) an activity in which one understand the role of the individual plays in the achievement of some overall goals d) a sense of taking pride in what one is doing and in doing it well.

We can conclude that QWL is a wide-ranging concept, which includes adequate and fair remuneration, safe and healthy working conditions and social integration in the work organization that enables an individual to develop and use all his or her capacities. The definition also emphasize the good feeling perceived from the interaction between the individuals and the work environment. QWL means achieving the effective work environment that meets the organizational and personal needs and values that promote health, well being, job security, job satisfaction, competency development, and balance between work and non-work life.

The process of attempting to improve productivity, performance, and quality of work life is not always running smoothly. There are things that hinder and an obstacle on the way to achieve that goal. One of the effective solution to overcome these obstacles is to implement Employee Assistance Program, which is apply counseling in the workplace.

Employee Assistance Program

This program is a form of counseling facilities company which started its history of the United States in about 1900, and was initiated by the Ford Motor Company in 1914, where at that time the counseling directed at the establishment of a harmonious relationship between management and employees in the industry. The term Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was introduced by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. 1940 a milestone in the establishment of the EAP with emphasis on the problem of alcoholism in industry. Employee Assistance is a phrase now used to described a unified approach to intervention and assistance for a wide variety of related human problems in the workplace.”

EAP is a formal employer program for providing employees with counseling and/or treatment programs for problems such as alcoholism, gambling, or stress (Dessler; 2005). According to Mondy, et al. (2002) an employee assistance program is a comprehensive approach that many organizations have taken to deal with numerous problem areas, including marital or family difficulties, job performance problems, stress, emotional or mental health issues, financial troubles, alcohol and drug abuse, and other emotional disturbances (Mondy, et al., 2002). While some of these may originate “outside” the work context, they most certainly will have spillover effects to the work

context. Most programs are created to control substance abuse or mental health costs. Some have also become concerned with HIV and AIDS, eldercare, workplace violence, and natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and tornadoes.

There are various reasons why employers are turning to counseling as one method, among others, of caring for their workforce. (Carroll, 1996). Employers' responsibility for the welfare of their employees is one reason. The fact that employees are taking legal action and counseling services as one way of helping to manage the anticipating risk of changes taking place in organizations are another reasons. Counseling is one way of supporting employees as they cope with organizational change. Counseling can be seen as a way of improving mental health. Counseling also highlights the value of people as organizational assets. Pfeffer's (1994) research into successful organizations showed clearly that the most important ingredient was the way they cared for their employees. Counseling services within the workplace are being viewed not just as 'crisis' points or for severely disturbed individuals, but also as a preventive service. In the long run, preventive measures are more cost-effective. Workplace counseling makes sense when it is realized that employees spend about one-quarter of their lives in work settings; that, for many, key relationships are part of their work; that personal identity is often bound up with jobs; and that almost all people integrate personal and professional lives to a great extent. Having counseling available in the workplace means that problems can be dealt with fairly quickly and can be worked through in the very environment from which they often emerge.

Counseling in the workplace, specifically, has existed since the early 1900s though in quite different formats from those we understand by workplace counseling today. There is some evidence that the first counseling program in industry was initiated by the Ford Motor Company in 1914. Two companies, Metropolitan Life Insurance (in 1922) and R.H. Macey (in 1924) employed full-time psychiatrists. The term 'employee assistance programme' (EAP) was coined by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism as a way of widening provision to include problems other than alcohol. The 1940s witnessed the beginning of the EAP era of workplace counseling with such provision centred principally on alcohol issues in industry.

In the UK in 1971 the British Institute of Management, from its survey of 200 firms, discovered that 5 % offered some form of personal counseling to employees. In 1983 Orlans and Shipley (Carroll, 1996) surveyed 35 large UK organizations and discovered that all but three had occupational health facilities and, whereas nurses employed within these departments had undergone short-term counseling training, there was not a single case where extensive counseling training had been provided. EAP programmes in Britain are now well-established.

EAPs are increasingly popular, with more than 60% of larger firms offering such programs. One study found that personal mental health was the most common problem addressed by employee assistance programs, followed by family problems. For the company, programs like these produce advantages, not just cost. For example, sick family members and health problems such as depressions account for many of the sick leave days employees take. These absences can be reduced with employee assistance programs that provide advice on issues like elder care referrals and disease management (Dessler; 2005). In addition to promoting the health, morale, and productivity of employees, EAPs also aim to strengthen the relationship between groups of employees, management, labor unions, and local community groups.

Reddy (1994) is the most intense fighting figure to show that the EAP can be switched from just at the surface to the heart of organizational life, by recommending that the EAP should not only be viewed as a recorded program, but rather as a concept and philosophy of health in the workplace. This view is a real change from the concept of EAP, a change from what was done to the employees to the more general concept of EAP to create organizational change. Currently EAP linked to employee performance, management practices, and leadership style, training for supervisors, to support all employees and for training.

The establishment of effective working environment which is capable to integrate the needs and value of the organization with the needs and values of individuals in general looks at aspects of health, welfare, job security, job satisfaction, competency development, and the balance between work life and personal life.

EAP, QWL and Organizational Development

It is often said that “people are our most important asset”. Providing EAP with its counseling services is just one of the ways organizations can value their staff as human beings – so long as they are not used as a way of avoiding dealing with fundamental structural problems (Loretta Franklin, 2003, p. 27). Effective management recognizes that the well-being of staff is of important for the growth and development of organizations. Apart from any legal requirement or humanitarian obligation of employers to their staff, it is recognized that people give of their best and work productively and co-operatively only if they are free from unnecessary worries and strain. Conselling is one way of ensuring that both individual and organizational concerns are addressed and resolved. Provision of face-to-face confidential conselling for employees has emerged as a significant way in which both public- and private-sector organizations are providing support for their staff .

Yeager (1983) is very definite that counseling in an organizational setting is different from counseling in other contexts : “..... for a practitioner to approach an organizational context case from the point of view of traditional therapeutic criteria of wellness is inappropriate.” For him, the criteria of counseling are ‘performance and productivity’ and the role of counselor is to get the employee fit and ready for work. At the other end the aims and objectives of counseling in the workplace is the totally person-centered position or for the sake of the welfare of human being. There is a range of position between the two poles which combine the above with varying emphasis on one position or the other. After all the aim and objectives of EAP is just the same with the concept of QWL, i.e to enable an individual to develop and use all his or her capacities as well as to achieve the effective work environment that meets the organizational and personal needs and values.

Organization introduce workplace counseling provision while thinking that through workplace counseling they can enhance the quality of working life and perhaps stimulate positive internal change. Workplace counselling provides an opportunity – sanctioned by the company – for employees to raise personal matters in a professional and confidential setting; it offers the potential for personal change and the scope for personal development. It offers opportunities for clients to re-consider their work

experiences and to ponder on what – if anything – needs to change (Michael Walton in Carroll and Walton, 2001). In this case the role of the workplace counselor is as a force for organizational review and (possibly) change is reinforced. Conventionally, counseling and psychotherapy is about self-insight, self- review, and the creation of a potential for change at the individual level. Counselling and psychotherapy also have much to say about collective and institutional change. After all, if the counselor can enable employees to gain insight and ‘change’, and if employees are a sub-set of the overall organization, surely counseling approaches will have something to say about change at the organizational level too ! (Carroll and Walton, 2001, p. 134)

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