Occupational Health Implication of Covid-19 Layoffs on Airline Ground Staff: Study on Mental Health Effects

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Keywords: Airlines Industry, Covid-19, Ground Staff, Layoff, Mental Health.

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic forced numerous businesses to temporarily shut down and lay off their employees, triggering profound mental health repercussions. Sudden job loss can result in anger, stress, anxiety, and frustration, potentially leading to post-traumatic stress symptoms, substance abuse, and societal harm. This study explores the impact of COVID-19-related layoffs on workers' mental health, aiming to comprehensively assess their emotional experiences and coping strategies. The research employed qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and document analysis, to collect and analyze data thematically. Nine former aviation employees who had been laid off during the pandemic participated in the study. The findings reveal that, despite the challenging circumstances, these individuals exhibited positive mental health and psychological well-being following their job terminations. They predominantly employed problem-focused coping mechanisms to navigate this crisis. What sets COVID-19-induced layoffs apart from regular ones is the exceptional difficulty faced by these workers in securing new employment, given the widespread industry disruptions. Ground staff at airports, with their specialized technical skills, encountered even greater obstacles in finding alternative employment. This research underscores the unique challenges and resilience exhibited by workers affected by pandemic-induced layoffs, shedding light on the importance of mental health support and reemployment strategies in such extraordinary circumstances.

1 INTRODUCTION

The topic of mental health in the workplace has been a subject of interest and discussion for a significant period of time. In the past, the combination of medicine, public health, and psychology was believed to be a potential factor for preventing mental health problems in the workplace (LaMontagne et al. 2014). Job insecurity and conditions lead to diminished productivity at work for workers with poor mental health (Bubonya et al., 2016). Although many studies have discussed mental health in the workplace, the current Covid – 19 pandemic situations has made it very different. A knowledge gap exists between workers' mental health in normal and current situations. The growing recognition of how the Covid-19 pandemic affects workers' mental health in the workplace has made research on this topic crucial. One of the collateral damages of the Covid–19 pandemic is the progressive spread of stigma, as evidenced by extensive research (Bruns et al., 2020;

Logie & Turan, 2020). An employee who has been sick, quarantined, and wants to return to work will face problems during this time. The stigma toward the workers who have experienced the Covid–19 increases the risk of psychopathology while experiencing stigma in the workplace could lead to a loss of productivity (Li, Yang, Zhang, Cheung, Xiang, 2019). These situations highlight how work conditions are crucial for workers' well-being during the Covid–19 pandemic. The pandemic has altered both the social and working environments in many ways. Factors such as social distancing policies, anxiety about the possibility of getting infected, government policies about lockdown and isolation, cessation of productive activity, decreasing income, and fear of the future will somehow impact workers' mental health. Therefore, the workplace is essential for moderating or worsening employees' mental health (Giorgi et al., 2020).

The COVID–19 pandemic has affected almost every country worldwide. Consequently, it has far-

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reachingglobal economic and business consequences. For example, the pandemic has caused the most prominent global recession in history. Some of the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic includea significant income decrease, transportation, manufacturing, tourism, service disruptions, and, finally, a rise in unemployment. The pandemic has forced many industries to shut down and some are permanently closed. One of the industries that was affected the most by the pandemic was aviation. After some countries announced travel bans and isolation requirements, almost all airlines were forced to severely limit their flights. This has led to a massive layoff of airline employees (pilots, flight attendants, groundling staff, etc.) in almost every country.

Corporate downsizing has resulted in job losses. Many employees had experienced layoffs, while others believed that they might soon lose their jobs. Losing a job abruptly can be mentally disturbing and potentially cause problems in workers' mental health. This opinion is strengthened through the research findings of Sullivan and Von Watcher (2006) in Mendolia (2009) that the death rate appears to have increased significantly in the years after mass layoffs. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, the impact of job loss is far greater than just a matter of income loss. Beyond the direct financial losses brought about by unemployment, unemployment's often-overlooked yet more profound impact during COVID-19 is on employees' mental health (Fan & Nie et al., 2020).

Job loss sometimes leads to anger, stress, anxiety, grief, and frustration (Rajkumar, 2020), which could also lead to long-term post-traumatic stress symptoms, such as alcoholism, drug addiction, and suicide, which could harm individuals and society. Given its enormous impact on individuals, it is unsurprising that in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included mental health as a priority for global development. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for everyone at any level and age have made research on this topic crucial. Some believe that mental health refers only to depression, schizophrenia, and PTSD. Mental health is an individual's overall condition (emotional, psychological, and social well-being) (mental.health.gov). Some studies have found a profound negative correlation between COVID-19 andmental health; those existing studies only test the general correlation between COVID-19 and mental health, not giving enough attention to the specific stressors from different perspectives and various business sectors.

The airline industry, characterized by its unique work environment, stringent regulations, and unpredictable operational conditions, may present distinctive factors that contribute to the impact of layoffs on mental health. It is crucial to bridge this gap byconducting empirical research in this specific context. While previous research in the airline industry has extensively examined the impact of layoffs on the mental health of pilots (Olaganathan & Amihan, 2021) and cabin crews (Görlich & Stadelmann, 2020), there appears to be a significant research gap in the investigation of layoffs' effects on the mental health of ground staff within the airline industry. The ground staff, including mechanics, engineers, andsupport personnel, play a critical role in ensuring the safety and efficiency of airlines. Nevertheless, their experiences and well-being during layoffs have received limited attention in the existing literature.

The ground staff in the airline industry have distinct job responsibilities, work environments, and career trajectories compared to pilots and flight attendants. Thus, the effects of layoffs on the mental health of ground staff may differ because of job-specific factors, such as the nature of their work, level of job security, and extent of interaction with passengers and flight crews.

Hence, addressing this research gap in the literature by conducting empirical studies on the impact of layoffs on the mental health of ground staff in the airline industry can enhance our understanding of theunique challenges faced by this occupational group. In addition, such research has the potential to contribute to the development of evidence-based interventions and strategies that support the well-being of ground staff during periods of organizational change and workforce reduction.

Therefore, this study explores the impact of layoffs on the mental health of ground staff in the airline industry. In addition, this research aims to investigate the psychological consequences of such layoffs on ground staff members, focusing on their coping strategies and the responses that individuals may exhibit following a layoff in the airline industry.

2 METHODS

This study was conducted on former Gapura Angkasa outsourcing employees (Banda Aceh Branch Office, Indonesia). Gapura has been one of the largest ground-handling companies in Indonesia since 1998. As an independent ground service provider, Gapura offers services in passenger and baggage handling, flight operations, hospitality, lounge, cargo, and

warehousing. The process was started by requesting data from the HR department regarding the number of terminated employees, then carefully selecting the eligible participants, giving them informed consent (a consent sheet was used to determine their willingness to participate in this study), and finally interviewing the HR about the criteria used in termination.

2.1 Research Design

The data were collected from terminated employees of PT. Gapura Angkasa (one of the leading companies in ground handling services and other business activities that support the aviation business at the airport) in the Banda Aceh branch office. This study aims to describe a phenomenon involving rich data collection from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants, including their perspectives, attitudes, and opinions.

2.2 Population and Samples

This observation employed a purposive sampling methodology with two specified criteria: (1) Terminated during the early COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, which occurred between March and May 2020, and (2) Has worked for the airline's company for at least ten years. These criteria were used to choose the participants. The criteria listed above were chosen based on various factors, including the fact that not all employees were laid off as a result of the covid 19 epidemic; some were laid off due to a lack of commitment regardless of business regulations.

The period from March to May was chosen considering that it was the moment when the airline company had a massive termination owing to the reduction in aircraft operational hours. Considerations regarding work experience were considered based on the statement of Estherina, Puspitarini, and Rachmawati (2019), who mentioned that employees with a ten-year service period are considered to have a strong attachment and loyalty toward the organization; hence, getting laid off must be considered a betrayal and affect their mental health. In March 2020, the company initiated the first stage of employee dismissal, resulting in the termination of twenty-three employees. This decision was made for employees with less than two years of work. Following the initial round of dismissals, the company implemented a second stage in April 2020. During this phase, an additional 17 employees were allowed to go, bringing the total number of terminated employees to 40.

Therefore, this study focuses on employees who

were terminated in the second stage. The 17th employees who were dismissed in the second stage are listed in Table 2. According to the sample criteria mentioned above, nine participants were eligible to participate in this research, namely (by initials): ES, UM, TRA, MJ, ZI, AS, TQ, AB, and IW.

Table 1: Samples of Terminated Employees(M = marriage, S = Single).

	Name	Position	Age	Years	Status
1	ES	GSE Op	38	11+	M
2	UM	Ramp Handling	30	10+	M
3	IB	Loading Master	32	9+	M
4	FO	Baggage Handling	26	6+	M
5	NA	Baggage Handling	21	2+	S
6	TRA	Baggage Handling	38	10+	M
7	MJ	Baggage Handling	31	10+	M
8	RF	Baggage Handling	24	2+	S
9	NZ	Baggage Handling	21	2+	S
10	ZI	Baggage Handling	40	12 +	M
11	IS	Baggage Handling	30	8+	M
12	RJ	AVSEC	26	5+	M
13	AS	AVSEC	36	12+	M
14	TQ	Greeting service	40	17+	M
15	AB	Operation	38	14+	M
16	DM	Ground handling	29	8+	S
17	IW	Ground handling	35	11+	M

2.3 Data Collecting

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document studies, as elaborated below:

2.3.1 Semi-Structured Interview

The researcher used semi–structured interviews with open–ended questions; therefore, the interviewer could delve deeply into personal matters and sometimes sensitive issues. The interview guide was drawn based on six characteristics of mental health from Jahoda (1958): attitude toward the self, personal growth, integration, autonomy, an accurate perception of reality, and environmental mastery.

Table 2. Summary of Interview Guide.

Indicator	Questions Summary
Dimension: Autonomy	
The individual can see himself as an independent person and at the same time able to work with others cooperatively	How do you bounce back after getting laid off?
Dimension: Personal Growth	

Desire to use all the abilities to achieve something, & having a reasonable life goal, making a certain effort to achieve it	What do you think about equipping yourself with new skills?
Dimension: Perceived Self Efficacy	
The thoughts, feelings, and ideas that a person has about himself	How satisfied are you with your life these days?
Positive Attitude Toward the Self	
Able to evaluate or assess their own ability, and capacity	How do you treat yourself lately?
Environmental Mastery	
Facing life's uncertainty with positive affirmation, an individual's feeling toward the family, work, social life	Do you think you could always rely on your family or friends in case you need support?
Perception of Reality	
Ability to learn & interpret external phenomena in relation to the norms and have a realistic view of the world	Have you felt isolated lately?

2.3.2 Non – Participant Observation

Observations are usually used to gain insight into a specific setting and actual behavior (Hak, 2007). Observations can be classified into two types: participant observation and non-participant observation. The type of observation used in this research is a non-participant observation, which meansthat the observer is not part of the observation and tries not to influence the setting by their presence. During the observation, the observer took notes on everything that was significantly shown by the participants, for example, their expression when they talked about the layoff, their emotions, their gestures, etc.

2.3.3 Document Analysis

This study analyzed documents through non–personal documents, such as company policies, regardless of termination procedures. To manage the validity and reliability of the data research, method triangulation was also used to assess the consistency of our findings by combining multiple data sources. To gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, various approaches were taken to analyze the data from different perspectives.

2.4 Data Analysis

To assess the mental health of workers who have been terminated, a thematic analysis was conducted. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method that is usually applied to a set of texts, such as interview

transcripts. We closely examined the data to identify the themes, ideas, and patterns of meaning that emerged repeatedly. Analyzing data through thematic analysis consisted of six steps: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the conclusion or result.

3 RESULTS

According to the collected data, the company terminated 40 employees in early 2020. This termination of employment was carried out in two stages: in the first stage, the company laid off 23 employees, while in the second stage, another 17 employees were dismissed. The participants admitted that the termination of employment was carried out by telephone and WhatsApp applications due to social distancing. This action made them feel unappreciated and thought they could be easily replaced. Even though, in the end, the companycalled back to provide an official letter, the feeling remained.

"…. One afternoon, I was called and informed that Ihad been temporarily laid off. I was very shocked andthe fact that they gave me such important news on thephone made me feel disrespected… You know… I mean…I have been working for the company for 10 years or more now. Didn't I at least deserve a better way?" (Verbatim of subject UM – line 0017)

During the pandemic, employer considerations for employee termination included factors such as the current situation, flight operating hours, employee performance test results, and period of employment. Researchers have pointed out that layoffs during the pandemic were different from those in regular times in several significant ways. First, employees were often terminated with short notice, leaving little time to prepare or seek alternative options. Second, there was a possibility that they might need to receive severance pay, which adds to the financial burden of losing their jobs.

Finally, finding new employment opportunities has become increasingly challenging owing to the widespread impact of the pandemic on various industries. These findings highlight the distinct challenges that employees encounter when going through layoffs caused by the pandemic.Additionally, the complexity of their job roles and advanced technical abilities pose a challenge in securing alternative employment opportunities.

3.1 Terminated Worker's Mental Health

As previously stated, there were nine eligible participants who were willing to partake in this research. Once the participants were presented with the informed consent form and had their rights and responsibilities explained to them for the research, a semi-structured interview was conducted. The researcher compiled an interview guide based on Jahoda's (1958) theory. A summary of the interview guidelines is provided in Table 3. Overall, the results showed that participants' mental health was positive. This can be seen through the participant's verbatim transcript, which showed their ability to cope with unpleasant situations such as termination. Even the individuals had anticipated that a situation like this would arise, given the current state of the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, they were taken aback upon hearing about the layoff for the first time. Furthermore, it was observed that the research participants were able to quickly adjust to their situations and maintain a positive mindset. They were able to gain valuable insights, make informed decisions, and reorganize their lives accordingly. It is worth noting that five of the subjects who were laid off were able to secure new employment within 1-1.5 months. This serves as evidence that their perceived self-efficacy, positive self-image, and realistic perception of reality were strong, as suggested by the theory.

It has been found that out of the six dimensions of mental health, most of the subjects scored low in the category of personal growth. The subjects acknowledged that they did not actively seek out opportunities to acquire new skills or knowledge because they were more focused on finding a new job as quickly as possible. They believed that improving themselves with specific skills was a waste of time. A more in-depth discussion regarding the six indicators of mental health that were evaluated will be provided through the following points: autonomy, personal growth, perceived self-efficacy, positive attitude towards oneself, perception of reality, and environmental mastery.

3.1.1 Autonomy

Many participants who have been laid off could take control of their lives. This is evident in their ability to independently plan and reorganize their lives after experiencing job loss. As expressed by one subject: "*During the first month, I did not want to think about work at all. I just wanted to enjoy my life. I had not taken time off in 10 years, so I decided to relax. But now, after a month has passed, I'm focused on finding a new job or starting a new venture." (From the transcript of Subject TRA - Line 0081)*

Regarding the other subjects, AB and IW reported that it took them only one week to recover and refocus on their life goals. AB stated: "All I wanted at the time was another job, regardless of whether I liked it or not. I had to support my family, so finding a new job was crucial. I even considered taking odd jobs as long as they were halal, as the priority was to secure a new job immediately" (verbatim, line 0008).

Differences in gender and marital status may influence one's perspective. For instance, TRA, whose financial stability is supported by her husband, feels less urgency in seeking a new job and can take her time deciding when to return to work. However, for the other subjects, who are the heads of their households with children and a spouse to support, immediately setting new life goals after being laid off is imperative.

3.1.2 Personal Growth

Among the nine subjects, only MJ believed that acquiring new skills would improve his career. MJ stated that: *"Yes, I am considering taking some training either from the government or independently. I am not good in a foreign language; thus, I might consider learning the English language for instance" (Verbatim Subject MJ – line 0087)*

Subject ES believes that they don't require any particular training to enhance their skills for securing a better job. *"I didn't undergo any training. I don't think it's essential. Moreover, I quickly landed a new job, so I didn't feel the need for it" (verbatim Subject ES - line 0093).*

UM, the subject, believed that his ten years of experience at Gapura Angkasa company was sufficient for obtaining a new job. Therefore, he did not see the need to attend any training sessions to acquire additional skills. *"I didn't participate in any particular training. I have over 10 years of experience from my previous job, so I felt that was sufficient. It's just a shame that I was deemed too old to participate in any training." (Exact quote from UM subject, line 0077)*

3.1.3 Perceived Self Efficacy

In this study, nine individuals initially experienced shock, sadness, and feelings of rejection upon learning that their company had laid them off. They had never considered the possibility of being laid off before, as they had been employed by the company

for an average of over ten years, as reported by three of the participants.

One participant stated, *"I was extremely surprised. I did not want to believe it at first. When I was told during the day, I was confused. But at night, I felt very sad and had trouble sleeping."* (Direct quote from Subject TRA line 0063)

"At the time, I believed that the layoff was only intended for new employees. I couldn't understand why I was on the list too, given that I had been with the company for over 10 years." (Direct quote from TRA line 0059)

"We were all devastated at that time, particularly since it occurred so near to Eid Idul Fitri. (Direct quote from Subject TQ, line 0068)."

"I didn't anticipate getting laid off although I knew that the pandemic would greatly reduce flights and potentially affect my job, I didn't expect to be let go so quickly." (Original quote - AS line 0060)"

That emotion, however, did not stay long. In general, the individuals in this study understood the company's circumstances. The subjects confessed that it only took them a moment to comprehend the information of the layoff and immediately accepted the truth, although they were dissatisfied that they would not receive any severance compensation as a result of the layoff.

"We understand the situation; it's not like the company voluntarily laid us off; it was due to the pandemic, and we truly understand that!" The only thing that makes us really upset with the company is that it did not compensate us when we were let off. All allowances are immediately terminated. My BPJS has been canceled, and all of my authorizations have been removed." (Original quote – ZI line 00072)

3.1.4 Positivity Towards Oneself

Concerning positive relationships with themselves and others, the interviewees confessed that after being laid off, they regained self-love and self-worth, becoming more appreciative of jobs and family. Subjects reported that the presence of their closest friends and family helped them cope with the layoff scenario throughout the epidemic. These subjects felt completely supported by their families, allowing them to embrace themselves without feeling overwhelmed. The family's reaction to the layoff has been mostly positive, with direct support such as assisting with a job search or simply providing incentives. According to the research subject, this

type of deed has become a good reinforcement for them to proceed forward.

"When the company laid me off, I began to fully love myself and my family." Being laid off after more than ten years with the company made me realize that the company did not need me as much as I needed them. They might easily replace me with someone else. As a result, I began to love myself more, to do things that I enjoy, and to abandon activities that are detrimental to myself and my family." (Subject UM line 0081 in Verbatim)

3.1.5 Environmental Expertise

Almost identical to the explanation above, the participants have been able to master the environment, take advantage of chances, and regulate the environment according to their needs. Subject AB, for example, was instantly looking for a new job opportunity in order to meet his daily basic demands. The individual eagerly explores every possibility, for example, by contacting close friends or family to inquire about career chances.

"It's extremely difficult to find a new job because I no longer meet the age requirement." People are terrified when they learn about my 10 years of job experience; they are concerned about a proper salary for someone at my level. Furthermore, my extensive technical background in the aircraft industry has made it difficult for me to find a job that matches my former skills." (Line 0089 of Verbatim Subject II - AB)

Subject TRA, in contrast to the previous subject, does not rely on family or close connections to get new employment. Instead, the subject TRA likes to leverage the complexity of modern technology to identify existing career chances.

"I'm looking for a new job on my own." Everything is digital nowadays, so it should be simple, right? Instagram provided me with some job posting information. I'm not the picky sort, so I applied to any firm and position that was available because I did not mind becoming a waiter, a cashier, or anything else. I will just take whatever opportunity comes my way! (Line 0085 of Verbatim Subject 1- TRA)

3.1.6 A Realistic Perception of Reality

In terms of reality perception, the nine research subjects have acknowledged that they have been laid off by the company. They are, however, ready to go on with their lives and are confident that they will reach their objectives shortly. They feel that their past

experiences will give worth to their lives in the future. The subject TRA believes that her experience as a front liner at PT Gapura Angkasa is comparable to her new position as a cashier at PT MT, where both occupations require similar customer service skills.

3.2 Dealing with Job Loss

The three subjects' emotional stages of processing job loss are quite comparable. Shock, disappointment, and denial were followed by an attempt to make peace with oneself (bargaining), and finally coping with the situation (acceptance). See Figure 1 for further information.

Figure 1: Stage of Procession Job Loss.

To bolster this point, psychiatrists point out that losing a job is sometimes equated with the sadness of losing a loved one. Any stage of grieving can be included in the emotional trajectory, which ranges from shock and denial to rage and bargaining, and finally to acceptance and hope. As stated by the subject:

"I was stunned at the time. I'm unable to accept the fact that I no longer have a job. Later that night, I feltboth sad and angry... (full transcript of Subject IM Line 0063)

Furthermore, because the subjects are all married, the sudden job loss prompted them to return to work as quickly as possible in order to meet their commitments to their families. It serves as a tremendous motivator for all three topics.

3.3 Coping Techniques

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1966), coping methods can be divided into two types: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping entails dealing with stress while actively addressing the issue. Emotion-focused coping, on the other hand, is associated with efforts to change or minimize stress-related negative feelings.

To cope with job loss, all three subjects in this study employed problem-focused coping mechanisms, such as immediately seeking new possibilities even if the job opportunities were radically different from past work experience. To summarize, families are regarded as the finest support mechanism for the three subjects dealing with layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Acceptance from a loved one can be quite beneficial in getting through difficult circumstances. Meanwhile, in order to protect workers' mental health, the corporation planning the mass dismissal should examine whether it is necessary, and if so, please do so with compassion (Knight, 2020).

4 DISCUSSIONS

The findings revealed that the three participants' mental health was in good shape after being laid off during the pandemic. It is possible because all of the subjects chosen for this study were employees of the airline. As we all know, the airline industry has dramatically cut operation hours due to government rules, independent of travel constraints. As a result, many other industries in the aviation industry have temporarily laid off some employees. Workers have predicted that they will be laid off shortly as a result of this circumstance.

As a result, the research participants braced themselves for the worst-case scenario of being laid off by the corporation during the COVID-19 epidemic. Workers were more inclined to take preventive action after acknowledging the uncomfortable situation, as predicted. Workers were more inclined to take preventive action after acknowledging the uncomfortable circumstance, as predicted. embracingreality is not always easy, but according to the research subjects, embracing the current circumstance will help them overcome the problem and lead to higher self-acceptance and a brighterfuture. They think that, even if the situation is dire, the first step toward improvement is admitting it for what it is.

Even if the layoff occurred during the epidemic, it had no significant impact on their mental health stability.Many psychological research has found that self-love, self-compassion, and self-acceptance are essential for mental health and well-being (Germer & Neff, 2013). According to research, having more self-compassion and self-acceptance increases resilience in the face of adversity, allowing people to recover more rapidly from unpleasant experiences (Germer & Neff, 2013).

It also assists people in dealing with failure or

embarrassment (Ferrari et al., 2018). Almost identical to the findings of this study, other studies have found that thankfulness mediates the association between layoffs, salary reductions, and employee mental health. Gratitude, defined as a strong sense of appreciation for something or a sense of being grateful, can be used to promote employee mental health (Parianti, Sofianti, Rosid, 2020).

Another line of research, however, reveals that work uncertainty, wage cuts, layoffs, and reduced benefits all contribute to job insecurity and, in the long run, negatively affect mental health. These and additional concerns may occur or worsen as a result of COVID-19 (Lund et al., 2018). This statement is supported by research on "Unemployment and Mental Health" conducted by Wilson and Finch (2021), who stated that rates of both unemployment and poor mental health have increased during the pandemic, as statistics show that in January 2021, 43% of unemployed people and 34% of people on furlough had poor mental health. This study shows that furloughing has offered some mental health protection.

Workers with pre-existing mental health problems, according to Yao et al. (2020), are generally less able to manage because of the many pressures caused by the COVID-19 epidemic. Additionally, workers who previously had a mental health illness may see their condition deteriorate. As a result, new employment initiatives should be created to mitigate the impact on workers' mental health and well-being. It is also vital to provide intensive support that provides stability for the laid-off employee.

In general, after experiencing layoffs, all participants undergo some changes in themselves; this is the result of a combination of positive and bad feelings from the circumstances they encounter. As can be observed from the numerous discussions on mental health indicators above, the three research subjects have good sentiments about the events, therefore layoffs due to the COVID-19 pandemic did not immediately cause their mental health to deteriorate.

Individuals do not need to feel good all the time to have sustainable mental health; on the contrary, feeling bad emotions from life is a natural part of existence; what is required is the ability to manage these negative emotions, which is essential for individuals' long-term well-being.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the findings of this study imply that

workers who were laid off during the pandemic had excellent mental health outcomes that were impacted by a variety of factors. Most of the participants had anticipated the potential of being laid off, which helped them cope with the first shock and navigate the difficult situation. They demonstrated resilience by restructuring their lives, especially their occupations, and demonstrating their adaptability. The findings also confirmed that individuals maintained a positive self-perception and an accurate knowledge of reality.

Notably, critical contrasts were made between layoffs during a pandemic and those that occur under normal conditions. To begin with, pandemic-related layoffs frequently occurred on short notice, giving employees little time to prepare.

Furthermore, as a result of the pandemic's poor circumstances, afflicted persons frequently faced obstacles such as a lack of severance pay and limited career options. Participants went through a variety of emotional phases when dealing with job loss, including shock, disappointment, denial, bargaining, and acceptance. The individuals' coping mechanisms were predominantly problem-focused coping, as evidenced by a proactive attitude to addressing their issues.

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