



Sak Madyo: Javanese Philosophy as A Preventive Medicine to Overcome Burnout of Young Remote Workers in Malang City

Shilvi Khusna Dilla Agatta^{*1} , Atik Triratnawati²

¹Antropologi, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 55281, Indonesia

²Antropologi, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 55281, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: shilvikhusnadillaagatta@mail.ugm.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of remote work systems followed by the development of technology and information has made many young workers enter the hustle culture trend that emphasizes productivity. However, it cannot be denied that this has an impact on the emergence of burnout among remote workers and has become a new challenge in the world of work. This ethnographic research conducted from July-October 2024 involving eight informants with Javanese ethnic background in the age range of 23-29 years will reveal how work culture and expectations affect workers' mental health, so that efforts to manage work pressure through local values are needed. The results showed that most informants who experienced burnout in the context of remote work and hustle culture realized the need for balance between work and personal life. The signals given by the body when they experience burnout such as prolonged physical fatigue and loss of motivation to work encourage them to take steps to recover by measuring their abilities. This is like the concept of sak madyo as a local Javanese value that emphasizes 'sufficiency' in living life. By understanding the meaning of 'enough', a healthy and sustainable work pattern will be created. The integration of local concepts in this modern work era indicates that traditional values have a contribution in understanding the dynamics of mental health in the digital era.

Keyword: Remote working, hustle culture, sak madyo.

ABSTRAK

Munculnya sistem kerja remote yang diikuti perkembangan teknologi dan informasi membuat banyak pekerja muda masuk dalam tren hustle culture yang menekankan pada produktivitas. Dampak yang kemudian muncul adalah keberadaan burnout di kalangan pekerja remote dan menjadi tantangan baru dalam dunia kerja. Penelitian etnografi yang dilakukan dari Juli-Oktobre 2024 ini melibatkan delapan informan dengan latar belakang etnis Jawa dalam rentang usia 23-29 tahun akan mengungkap bagaimana budaya kerja dan ekspektasi atau harapan berpengaruh terhadap kesehatan mental pekerja, sehingga diperlukan usaha mengelola tekanan kerja melalui nilai lokal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas informan yang mengalami burnout dalam konteks kerja remote dan hustle culture menyadari perlunya keseimbangan antara kehidupan kerja dan pribadi. Sinyal yang diberikan tubuh ketika burnout seperti kelelahan fisik berkepanjangan hingga kehilangan motivasi bekerja mendorong mengambil langkah pemulihan dengan mengukur kemampuan diri. Hal ini sama dengan konsep sak madyo sebagai nilai lokal Jawa yang menekankan pada "kecukupan" dalam menjalani hidup. Dengan memahami makna "cukup" akan tercipta pola kerja yang sehat dan berkelanjutan. Integrasi konsep lokal dalam era kerja modern ini mengindikasikan bahwa nilai tradisional memiliki kontribusi dalam memahami dinamika kesehatan mental di era digital.

Keyword: kerja remote, hustle culture, sak madyo.



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1. Introduction

Hustle culture is the right term to describe this situation. The existence of a hustle culture encourages people to be productive and label themselves as dedicated workers (Balkeran, 2020). However, hustle culture has the effect of neglecting the concept of working for a living, as individuals become unable to recognise the importance of prestige, self-esteem, and even social interaction. There has been criticism that remote working is potentially detrimental to physical health and mental well-being (Snape et al., 2017). WHO (2024) explains that mental health is an integral component that includes physical, mental, and social well-being, not just the absence of disease or infirmity. Mental health can help a person realise their abilities, cope with the pressures of life, work productively, and make many contributions to their environment. Efforts to maintain mental and physical health, every country according to Farmawati et al. (2022) has local knowledge that is adapted to local environmental, social and cultural conditions. As a pluralistic country, Indonesia has many tribes, and each tribe has local knowledge that is not the same from one another. In this research, local knowledge will focus on Javanese society.

Endraswara (2015: 117) mentions that Javanese people have a typical typology of thought, so it has its own uniqueness. This typology leads to the credo of an ethnicity that shows a certain way of life. Supadjar (2005:1) in Endraswara (2015) suggests that the essential Javanese culture is through the existence of *madhang* thinking which contains two concepts, namely eating and obtaining *pepadhang*. The concept originates from A-I-U, short for *aku-iki-urip*, which requires *pepadhang* to achieve true peace. Spirituality and materiality are two essentials for Javanese society (Endraswara, 2015: 118). A set of rules that organise, limit and give colour to life is referred to as the Javanese ethos of life by Endraswara (2015: 120). Mulder (1985: 17) in Endraswara (2015: 121) explains that Javanese people have a *kejawen* life ethos that upholds freedom, including the freedom to have a healthy mentality. In this regard, there is a similar study that emphasises the use of Javanese philosophy to maintain mental health conducted by Farmawati et al. (2022) with the title 'Javanese Indigenous Healing for Physical and Raw Health' by adopting qualitative research methods. The results of the study stated that the Javanese treatment system was found in Javanese manuscripts such as Serat Primpon Jampi Jawi by emphasising the life philosophy of *narimo ing pandum* to maintain mental health in general. Unfortunately, Fatmawati et al's research (2021) is still based on literature studies so that further research is needed, especially analysing the application of Javanese philosophical concepts to maintain mental health and community happiness.

The Javanese cultural approach *sak madyo* can be used as an alternative view of life that is relevant to modern life, especially hustle culture. *Sak madyo* emphasises balance and simplicity in living life, including in terms of work to be contradictory to the hustle culture tends to encourage a person to work excessively in achieving success tends to ignore welfare. In the context of health anthropology, this philosophy can be utilised as preventive medicine or health care practices that aim to improve patient well-being (ACPM, 2025). The utilisation of traditional philosophies such as *sak madyo* has unique advantages in implementing and promoting health (Yan et al., 2024). Therefore, this paper will explain the impact of overwork culture on the mental and physical health of young remote workers by providing an alternative to the application of *sak madyo* in their lives. Through this study, it is hoped that it can provide an in-depth understanding of how to overcome the emergence of burnout through local Javanese values as an intervention to prevent burnout among the younger generation of *sak madyo* philosophy.

2. Method

This study uses ethnographic methods by involving researchers in informants' activities while at work. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with informants who were in remote work settings in July-October 2024. Considering the Javanese ethnic context, the research location was chosen in Malang City, East Java because it is a potential city for career development. Malang City also has various facilities such as cafes and workspaces that are convenient for remote working (Bidang Komunikasi dan Informasi Publik, 2023; Novrian, 2024). Informants were selected based on a variety of job roles and workplaces to generate a variety of answers in the age range of 23-29 years, assuming that they are at the career development stage. The search for informants was conducted through LinkedIn because it provides direct access to workers by considering informant profiles that reflect the characteristics of workers in hustle culture activities.

Afterwards, the researcher contacted potential informants to explain the purpose of the research and possible disadvantages as part of research ethics (Vaidya, 2010). When the informants agreed to participate, the researcher scheduled an in-person meeting to explain in detail the research activities and conduct in-depth interviews. There were eight informants who participated and all of their names were anonymised to avoid any possible future harm.

No	Name	Age	Gender	Role of Job	Contract	Marital Status
1.	A	24	Female	Teacher	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Single</i>
2.	B	24	Female	Teaching Assistant, Class facilitator	<i>Freelance</i>	<i>Single</i>
3.	C	24	Female	Teacher & Content writer	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Single</i>
4.	D	25	Male	Business Operation Associate	<i>Full time, freelance</i>	<i>Single</i>
5.	E	28	Female	Design Graphic & Copywriter	<i>Full time, freelance</i>	<i>Single</i>
6.	F	28	Male	IT Resource Consultant	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Single</i>
7.	G	28	Male	Full stack Developer	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Single</i>
8.	H	29	Female	Teacher	<i>Freelance</i>	<i>Married</i>

Table. 1. Informant data information

At this stage, the researcher also asked the informants' permission to make observations when working from home to see the natural setting. Unfortunately, some informants were not willing to do so, so work activities were observed when working from a cafe. Direct observation was chosen to see and understand the influence of the environment on habits, productivity, and social interactions in remote work. The interview data was then analysed using literature studies to identify the patterns and experiences of remote workers' lives, especially those related to mental health, work pressure, and life balance. The analysis will emphasise the field findings with the *sak madyo* philosophy as a preventive strategy to use traditional values in the midst of advancement.

3. Result and Discussion

From Minimal Working Hours to Hustle Culture: Triggers for burnout

The Indonesian government regulates working hours in Undang-Undang No 11 Tahun 2020 tentang Cipta Kerja (UU Cipta Kerja). The regulation imposes two schemes, namely 7 working hours for 6 working days or 8 working hours for 5 working days with a total work week of 40 hours. However, many young remote workers actually utilise their free time to take on other jobs to appear more productive. Absher (2020) mentions that young workers tend to follow the adage of having multiple professions in order to obtain a job that makes them 'passionate'. The excitement is derived from the pressure during the process of obtaining the dream job.

'I used to have a double job, after that I still accepted freelance. It was confusing. But it happened because there was something I wanted to achieve, so I accepted everything that came in. That was my mistake too, I didn't think about it, it turned out to create problems for myself. But if I didn't do that, I wouldn't have learnt either, so I just considered it a process. Until finally I am now in a very healthy work environment, because maybe I have learnt a lot from before, I already know what I want.' (Interview with G, 23 October 2024).

G is a full stack developer at an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based company in the United States. Through an interview with G, the flexibility of time makes him take more than one job without doing long-term considerations both physically and mentally. From her experience, G realised that making unplanned decisions can have a negative impact, making her decide to pursue one job role.

'So why I got a double job is not like kids nowadays who work hard so they don't overthink, but because at that time I was only freelancing so I tried to get a full-time job that was more steady and clear. I got it in the end, but I didn't want to give up the freelance work because I had a contract too, so I did it all. It's still early days, so I'm just learning. I worked from 9-9. At that time, I was very stressed, I wanted to work until I was really lazy, the peak was often sick. Until finally I didn't stay with the two jobs, I didn't renew my contract until I finally got the company now. And I realised

that this is the company I want, because previously I did more writing than design, not according to the contract. That's why here I make sure I do more design.' (Interview with E, 18 October 2024).

E's experience as a graphic designer is quite different from G. Starting her career as a freelancer made E determined to have a full-time job that was considered more stable. However, a contract that could not be left at her previous company left her with no choice but to work two jobs at once. Initially, E did not feel that working two jobs had a negative impact on her body, until her physical condition began to fail, she realised that the work she was doing was unhealthy, and ended both contracts to take a break to recover her health.

'I work in three places, but all the contracts are freelance, so I don't work every day. I only work when there is a project. But if everything works, I can work every day. If not, the two jobs complement each other. In the beginning, I was surprised that I often overlapped when all three were running at the same time. At that time, I felt that my emotions were unstable and I was really confused about the condition of my body. But now there are only two of them, alternating week-to-week. I feel like my motivation is actually this, because I feel like my working hours are not enough, so I don't have enough income.' (Interview with B, 6 October 2024).

As a freelancer in an educational start-up whose working hours are mostly from afternoon to evening, B's hustling context is a manifestation of the lack of working hours that she feels has an impact on the amount of income. This occurs as a result of economic insecurity that shifts responsibility from institutions to individuals (Cuervo et al., 2024) making individuals have to find solutions to the economic problems they face. Therefore, B does hustle work because he feels the need to maximise job opportunities, even though he has to do more than one type of work. Indirectly, this condition requires individuals to continue to be productive even when the work done exceeds the limits of their abilities. This pattern gives B a habit that not having more than one work contract makes her feel short of hours to work, which leads to decreased productivity and the risk of burnout.

'I used to have more than one job, but all of them were consistent in the digital marketing field. Since I've been in my current company, I don't work remotely anymore, except for providing material when I become a mentor. Now that I'm in my second year at this company, a total of 4 years of remote work, I feel really settled, so I started adding jobs again by returning to my old company as a freelance. To be honest, I really miss my ambitious days, so I'm looking for additional work again because of that'. (Interview with D, 15 October 2024).

D's experience illustrates the dynamics of hustle culture among young workers who have gained stability in their main job. D sees productivity in how much time he spends working. However, this has the potential to lead to burnout and a decline in quality of life, as personal time for oneself becomes limited (Perić, 2024). Not only that, D's experience reflects that social expectations tend to link professional identity and productivity as more important to fulfil than personal well-being.

The hustle culture experiences of the four informants with unmarried status differ from those of the married informants as follows.

'I work in three places, with freelance and part-time contracts. Because I work in three places, I often compare these three places. If for example, there is one who has a bigger salary but he is very complicated. But that's okay, because I'm a stay-at-home mum, work for me is healing even though I've definitely experienced stress and laziness at work because I'm really tired. At work, I can get a lot of positive energy. But after a while, I also thought, work is for fun, so now I only take it in one company, because the third one can give me a big fee and I like teaching people who are already big. It just feels good. In the previous two, I didn't, teaching children.' (Interview with H, 17 October 2024).

H is the only informant who is married and has a four-year-old child. Her status as an IRT makes the hustle culture she experiences give rise to a unique perspective, because working for her is a way to take a break from her household activities. Although in the end she felt over-pressured, she felt reluctant to work when working in three places. During her career, H realised that she needed to balance her work life and her activities as a housewife, so she decided to focus on one job that provided greater benefits.

Through interviews with the five informants, it provides an understanding of what Absher (2020) calls 'joy through pressure' because young workers tend to be encouraged to take new jobs as a process of achieving expectations from society instead of finding meaning in their work. Anthropologist Graeber (2018) calls these bullshit jobs that lead to meaningless, aimless, and even unimportant work. Doing bullshit jobs results in negative feelings within the self. The psychological challenges that workers experience with remote working conditions and the existence of hustle culture can be labelled burnout. Workers begin to realise that working excessively brings up feelings of fatigue that cannot be explained to others, sometimes individuals are even unaware or unable to describe their feelings (Olding et al., 2021). Generally, they will lose interest in their work or daily activities as a whole. In this context, the existence of burnout is triggered by the narrative that work productivity is judged not by the 'quality' of work, but the 'quantity' of time devoted to work.

The experience of hustle culture among remote workers seems to support the glorification of hard work as a means of achieving success, so individuals tend to be encouraged to continue to be productive without considering the physical limits of bodily and mental regulation. The existence of hustle culture normalises workers' over-commitment, making workers often sacrifice work-life balance (Balkeran, 2020; Perić, 2024). This condition illustrates the dynamics of the modern work system that glorifies productivity to meet social expectations and maintain economic stability (Cuervo et al., 2024) by ignoring the limits of personal abilities. Of the eight informants, age illustrates that those aged 23-26 years tend to have a high spirit to show their identity by working 'harder' in order to obtain a higher career path. In contrast, those aged 27-29 years old tend to feel secure with their position, so they choose to give up additional jobs and focus on one main job. Thus, it can be understood that hustle culture affects the way a person views hard work not as something necessary, but rather a social expectation.

The Impact of Burnout on Mental and Physical Health

Burnout is a prolonged response to emotional and interpersonal stress that affects the reduction of energy in undergoing work activities (Qi et al., 2024). Burnout at work is seen from three main aspects, namely exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Kim et al., 2011; Moulton et al., 2022; Smith, 1986), whose existence is influenced by workload to work expectations. The symptoms and impact of burnout on young remote workers in Malang can be seen in the following table.

No	Nama	<i>Exhaustion</i> (physical and emotional fatigue)	<i>Cynicism</i> (attitude & withdrawal from work)	<i>Inefficacy</i>	Impact on work
1.	A	Difficulty sleeping, headaches (dizziness), eye pain, nausea, crying	Lazy, excessive fatigue, emotional outbursts, boredom, mood swings, loneliness.	Intense work competition, differences in students' characteristics and abilities, lack of family support, mismatched work expectations.	Delays responding to chats, struggles to start work, lacks energy, reduced motivation.
2	B	Overexertion, eye fatigue, back pain, crying.	Anxiety, lack of motivation, emotional outbursts, confusion about self, laziness, boredom, loneliness, feelings of low productivity, fear of non-renewal of contract.	Inadequate working hours, unstable salary, problematic students, parental pressure to become a civil servant, lack of a proper workspace.	Piled-up tasks, delays responding to chats, lacks energy, avoids responsibility for student issues.
3.	C	Difficulty concentrating, palpitations, crying, trouble sleeping, overwhelmed	Frustrated, unappreciated, emotionally drained, trapped in the same space, near anxiety, excessive worry, emotional instability, boredom.	Loneliness, lack of family support, lack of recognition from the company.	Works according to job description, views burnout as normal.

4.	D	Headaches, eye pain, back pain.	Overthinking, fear of being replaced, insecurity, struggles to start work the next day.	Stress from impatient clients, incompatibility with boss/colleagues, lack of a team.	Work is less effective, overexerts, changes work hours.
5.	E	Severe fatigue, nausea, vomiting, headaches, fever, dizziness.	Boredom, emotional instability, lack of focus.	Overtime, unreasonable deadlines, dissatisfaction with colleagues' communication styles.	Views work as a responsibility to complete.
6.	F	Lack of energy, altered sleep patterns.	Detached from emotions, mood swings early in career, bored with work and workspace, desire for constant rest, loss of interest.	High workload, felt exploited by the company early on.	No significant impact on work, views burnout as common.
7	G	Lack of focus, restlessness, disrupted sleep schedule	Heightened emotions.	Over-idealistic, disturbances from colleagues, poor communication, issues with programs.	No impact on work, considers all problems as common.
8.	H	Mental blankness, lack of focus, altered sleep patterns, irregular eating habits, dizziness, headaches.	Mood swings, lack of enthusiasm, boredom.	Frequent complaints, discomfort with online work environments, students' responses not meeting expectations or company regulations, no salary increase.	Overexerts to work, hopes teaching hours end quickly.

Table 2: Symptoms and Impact of Burnout

Maslach (2003) describes burnout as a situation where the ember flickers and the shell becomes scorched or burnt, turning cold and grey. As observed in the interviews, the eight informants experienced similar feelings, leading them to approach work with the mindset of "as long as it's finished." The meaning of the work itself tended to be overlooked. This condition makes burnout not only affect individuals but also companies, as it has a negative impact on the economy. The absence of workers from their jobs also increases the risk of them quitting (Nitzsche et al., 2013).

"So far, it's been up and down, sometimes I enjoy my work, sometimes I don't. Because it feels like it's repetitive, boring. It's different from when I first started, fresh out of college, trying out many things, it was exciting. I could find things that helped me grow, especially meeting amazing people. Now, it feels like I'm not growing at all. Sometimes I feel tired, for example, when I have to handle too much and work on more than one task. In the beginning, I was frustrated, thinking of quitting because I was teaching classes almost every day. There was so much administration. But I stayed because I didn't have another job. For me, work is about building my CV and networking, so I just accepted it." (Interview with B, October 6, 2024).

B's story reflects the burnout of enthusiasm when the work no longer provides meaning. Continuing to do work as usual is an effort to reduce anxiety. Olding et al. (2021) call this condition "numbing" toward what someone is facing. A similar story was shared by A, a private tutor at an educational startup.

"When I'm really tired, I'm so tired that I lose interest in doing anything, and my head feels full, like it's being squeezed, and I just want to take a day off. But the SOP says if it's not a sickness that requires immediate attention, I can't take a day off on the same day, I have to request it a week in advance. So, I had no choice but to teach. It ended up being messy, unstructured. Not at all optimal, I had to apologize to my students multiple times." (Interview with A, October 2, 2024).

A's experience illustrates a decline in work performance when facing extreme fatigue. The company's policy, which does not prioritize mental health, forced A to continue teaching, even when not in optimal physical or mental condition, leading to a decrease in the quality of teaching. This indicates that burnout affects interpersonal relationships in the workplace. In another conversation, A mentioned that her teacher's report card score dropped from 95 to 92, further strengthening the evidence that burnout does not only affect productivity but also job evaluations and professionalism. The decline in professionalism when experiencing extreme fatigue was also felt by other informants, as shown below.

"I've felt it before when there was so much work, just piling up, but I was forced to do it. Burnout was severe, but I was paid to finish the work, not to fix my burnout. So, I did it, but it wasn't optimal, half-hearted. Even though there were a lot of messages, I didn't want to do it. Even though I was just at home, I don't know, I was just tired." (Interview with D, August 30, 2024).

D's story reveals that extreme fatigue leads to a loss of work motivation. He emphasized that working from home does not always provide a sense of security and comfort because there are still demands to complete tasks. D's experience highlights that the focus of his work was on "output" rather than the process to achieve it, leading to neglect of personal well-being.

As documented in field notes and interviews, all workers completed their tasks without investing all their energy. The existence of employment contracts and company regulations forces workers to continue fulfilling their duties. If they breach the contract, the consequence is the threat of being laid off. This is what Olding et al. (2021) highlight as economic insecurity in precarious jobs, which leads to burnout. The limited job opportunities, high cost of living, and minimal government regulations contribute to the declining welfare of workers. The existence of a liberal economic system also worsens this situation, as it prioritizes productivity and economic profit over human welfare (Davis, 2021: 105). In the end, the only option is to keep working, even though workers realize that what they are doing is not beneficial for their health.

Experience and Risk

Hustle culture, as a marker of identity for "the most productive," can be traced through portfolios and CVs that reinforce self-image (Goodenough, 1963: 190). This situation drives workers to be ambitious about knowing and thinking about themselves, trapping them in a never-ending work culture that neglects physical and mental well-being. Burnout also emerges as a social issue due to personal pressures from feeling underachieving (Craiovan, 2015) because the self-image they have is judged to be insufficient, leading to a decline in psychological condition. Prospectively, COVID-19 opened calls to make use of free time for "productivity," but Martin in Wiltshire (2022) shows that the pandemic could be used to commodify lifestyle improvement. This suggests that the demand to remain productive in vulnerable situations should not be followed as it worsens burnout and mental well-being. A shift in mindset about work and productivity is necessary so that workers don't experience burnout. As Davis (2021: 105) expressed his concern about mental health issues as a problem shaped by neoliberal ideologies and industry, "The question is as deceptively simple as it is difficult to answer: where do we go from here?" This study also raises the question of how to balance work and personal life in overcoming burnout.

To achieve the ultimate goal based on desire, there needs to be a reflection on goals that do not contradict human limitations (Goodenough, 1963: 15). There must be an integration of a balanced life with work to counter toxic productivity that is closely tied to hustle culture (Perić, 2024). The decision of remote workers to balance professional and personal life can be traced through their negative experiences, such as mental instability and a weakened immune system, leading to an increased risk of burnout. E's experience as a graphic designer at two digital platform companies made her work twelve hours or more a day, leaving little time for rest or socializing with friends. Initially, E did not realize the negative impact of her work activities on her body. Eventually, E's began to experience the negative effects of her work and realized that she needed to reset her body.

"Working from 9 AM to 9 PM, sometimes 10 PM, I could really feel it when I didn't sleep well, like I'd wake up in the middle of the night. Over time, I became stressed, maybe burned out, and then I got sick. It became a recurring illness, happening every few weeks, and eventually, it lasted two weeks without getting better. Massage didn't help, so the doctor told me to focus on work-life balance because my working hours were excessive. I started adding exercise, and eventually, I quit freelancing." (Interview with E, October 18, 2024).

E's story emphasizes that experience is an important factor in shaping individual awareness. Experience becomes a space for reflection, helping individuals understand how the life they lead generates knowledge and skills to adapt better (Fazey et al., 2005). Listening to one's own body is an effort to prioritize health as an important aspect that needs attention (Wells, 2008), which led to an awareness of living a balanced life, as experienced by other informants such as G and D.

"I only started enjoying my work here, after I focused on one company. Before, my sleeping schedule was totally messed up. I wouldn't sleep until 1 AM, and then I'd wake up at 5 AM, then after that, I wouldn't sleep again. Now, I've started to normalize it. I can balance work time and personal time. I've started going to the gym and doing light exercise. On weekends, I can hang out and not work." (Interview with G, October 23, 2024).

"I've been in a situation where I felt overwhelmed, even getting stomach aches, and it was really disturbing. So, I asked for two days off. I didn't touch my laptop at all. I realized that I really need to balance work and leisure, which is why I started working from cafes more often. I've also made exercise a regular routine, like running or playing badminton, and it really made a difference." (Interview with D, August 30, 2024).

G and D's stories show that finding balance between personal life and work has brought positive changes to their physical and mental health. G's regular sleeping patterns made her begin to enjoy her work in one company, indicating that she now feels "satisfied" with what she has. Similarly, D realized the importance of rest and physical activity to maintain her health. These two experiences suggest that the informants have developed an awareness of establishing healthy life boundaries to achieve mental well-being. This condition indicates that no matter how far they go and struggle in the midst of modernity that emphasizes social achievement, they still return to their philosophy or self-identity as Javanese people. The concept of *sak madyo* serves as the foundation for making rational decisions based on life balance.

Sak Madyo or "just enough" teaches us to live without excess and to live simply (Saputra, 2021). *Sak madyo*, referring to moderation and balance in life, including work, encourages workers not to behave excessively or overextend themselves. The limitless nature of human life in the current era pushes us to consider limitations as a learning space to avoid harm to oneself, turning into a problem because of neglecting health. Therefore, the role of *sak madyo* is to provide space for workers to realize their capabilities and set limits on their work and bodily constraints (Farmawati et al., 2022). From a psychological perspective, as humans, we do have an inherent need to follow the times to avoid being seen as left behind. However, this does not mean that such assumptions should lead people to abandon local teachings that are still relevant. Even though it seems simple, applying the philosophy of *sak madyo* in life has a significant impact. It can be seen that young remote workers in Malang do not apply this philosophy, resulting in burnout as a consequence they must face. Rather than measuring their own capabilities, young workers tend to view themselves as subjects who must meet societal expectations. Although they may appear "successful" in their youth and "healthy" physically, it cannot be ensured that this will remain the same in the years to come. The application of the *sak madyo* philosophy, besides acting as a "brake," can also be seen as an effort to pursue a prosperous and optimal life in the years ahead.

Referring to Benedict (1959), what is experienced by young remote workers demonstrates a cultural pattern. Cultural behaviour tends to be integrated and has specific goals that may not be shared by other societies. These goals consolidate experiences to align with heterogeneous behaviour. A well-integrated culture will form cultural characteristics (Benedict, 1959: 51-52). The role of negative experiences among workers divides perceptions that are important and cannot be ignored as "bad signals" in the body, requiring a reset to restore it. Understanding one's own needs in carrying out each activity, or in Javanese terms called *ngukur awak* (measuring oneself), includes working in one company, taking a few days off, and engaging in physical activity as a new goal. This subjective framework will shape tendencies that can be seen in relationships or its basic nature, as there is discontinuity within it (Benedict, 1959: 54). The differences in

experiences among the eight informants suggest that excessive work to gain recognition as "the most productive" in society has proven to create burnout syndrome, which, if continued, negatively affects both physical and mental health. This serves as a sign that, as Javanese people, they are not familiar with the basic life principles that have long been practiced. This is why *sak madyo* acts as a boundary to filter or introduce new values to complement experiences in achieving a more distinctive goal framework, while also reminding the Javanese ethnic group that modern values need to be balanced with traditional values that integrate the body, mind, and soul to manage pressure and social expectations.

4. Conclusion

Physical and mental health are long-term assets that must be maintained. Burnout among young remote workers is a consequence of excessive work activities, where self-capacity is often not measured due to the drive to meet social expectations of appearing productive. Many young workers get trapped in the cycle of hustle culture, or endless work culture. Although they may initially manage well, it is undeniable that this has led to negative experiences that cause them to lose control over maintaining both their physical and mental health. As Javanese people, they seem to have forgotten the life philosophy of "just enough" or *sak madyo*. The existence of technology has actually pushed them to continuously appear productive, neglecting mental well-being. The consequence is the failure of young remote workers to balance their lives, leading to burnout.

The awareness of balancing work and personal life according to the *sak madyo* concept, which emphasizes a "middle ground" lifestyle, begins when workers experience the negative impacts of overworking. Although they may not fully understand that their actions are essentially preventive efforts through Javanese philosophy, beginning to balance their lives based on *sak madyo* shows an effort to avoid extreme exhaustion, as workers are now able to measure their own limits. It can be concluded that applying local community values in the modern lives of workers, even if not always consciously, can be an effective preventive measure to avoid burnout. Balancing work and personal life helps young workers avoid the trap of excessive work. *Sak madyo* strengthens the need for awareness in managing time and energy to face the challenges of the digital era without neglecting mental health.

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