

Research Report to “Hunting Job Company Advertising” from Consultant Li Regarding Full-time and Part-time Employment

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Abstract: The purpose of the report is to identify the health effects of long working hours and critically evaluate whether a dramatic restructuring of the workforce is the best solution to the company’s problem. It finds that long working hours are negative for employees’ health because they harm employee’s mental and physical well-being. Restructuring the workforce with more part-timers and fewer full-timers could reduce the negative impacts of long working hours but at the costs of reduced productivity. This report recommends the company to recruit more full-timers and provide them flexible working programs, whilst trying to cultivate a culture that highlights quality rather than quantity.

Keywords: Hunting Job Company Advertising; Full-time and part-time employment; Employees’ health; Employee’s mental

1. Introduction

The client organization is a busy advertising company with a culture of high commitment and devotion to work, which resulted in a consequence of long working hours. However, the long working hours, besides their proven hazards towards the organizational efficiency and usual consequence of mental absenteeism, also carry negative implications for employees’ health. The client organization is thinking about restructuring the workforce to include more part-time workers and fewer full-time workers [1]. The purpose of this report is to identify the health effects of long working hours and provide insights on the company’s plan to restructure its workforce. It will firstly give a thorough explanation of long working hours’ influences on employees’ health. Then, it will elaborate on the advantages of the company’s workforce restructuring plan. Immediately, the drawbacks of the restructuring plans will also be outlined. After that, the report will outline a brief summary of the findings [2]. Finally, it will provide recommendations for the client company. The data are all business journals from RMIT database and google.

2. Findings

2.1. Impacts of long working hours on employees’ health

Before elaborating long working hours’ impacts on employee’s health, it is important to firstly define health

effects [3]. According to Henry and Beauregard [3], although most people tend to associate a workplace policy’s negative health effects as causing illness and ailments, they usually neglect workplace policies’ possible damages to people’s mental health, which is also a crucial part of people’s overall health well-being [4]. For example, Sato [10] found that employees’ exposure to long working hours and overwhelming stress in work could reduce the effectiveness in their immune systems and cause other detrimental health effects such as insomnia, fatigue and headaches (Figure 1). With these in mind, it is important to consider both physical health and mental health when considering long working hours’ impacts on employees’ health.

Source: Yuji Sato, Hitoshi Miyake and Gilles Theriault [4], Over time work and stress response in a group of Japanese workers.

First of all, Sato [10] found that long working hours between 80-100 could deliver extremely negative consequences to people’s physical, These groups of workers got the highest risk to suffer from the diseases and risk increased with increasing working hours [5]. Furthermore long working hours usually make employees have to work under unusual stress, which Sato [10] has found to reduce the effectiveness of people’s immune systems, making them more vulnerable to epidemic diseases such as cold [6]. Also, long working hours sometimes result in fatigue symptoms among heavy brain workers such as programmers and financial analyses, who usually find themselves hard to get up during weekends and will

render employees into sub-healthy statuses, a state of increased vulnerability to ailments and diseases.

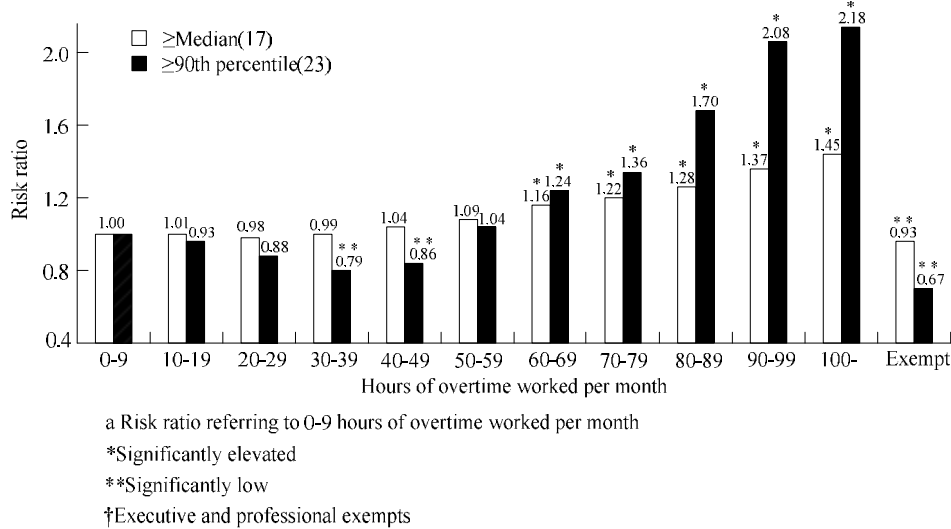


Figure 1. Risk ratio of different age groups

Besides their bad effects on employees’ physical health, long working hours could also result in deteriorations in people’s mental health, by disturbing their work-life balance. Long working hours could also result in employees’ loss of intimacy with friends and family, making them lonely and rejected by their communities [7]. This is also bad for people’s mental health.

2.2. Benefits of health effects of flexible working hours

There are a number of benefits of the restructuring plan of having fewer full-timers and more part-timers in the workforce. First of all, according to the survey from Maxwell and McDougall [8], when employees do not work too long, they will be less vulnerable to workplace diseases such as spinal diseases and the “air-conditioning diseases (which make people catch cold on hot summer days)”. Secondly, with less time spent at work, employees could spend more time doing physical exercise, which improve their physical health [8].

Perhaps the most important benefit is that this restructuring plan could help restore employees’ troubled work-life balances, giving them more time to spend with their families. It can make them feel comfortable and relaxing, thus, their improved mental health could strengthen their physical health.

2.3. Drawbacks of health effects of flexible working hours

But there are also some setbacks to the restructuring plan of having fewer full-timers and more part-timers [9]. The long or irregular flexible hours will lead to the sleeping problems (Figure 2). According to the Finnish Government’s Decree on medical examinations in work

that shift and night work due to the risk of illness (1485/2001), such as be addicted to caffeine or alcohol because of drinking too much coffee or beer at night [10].

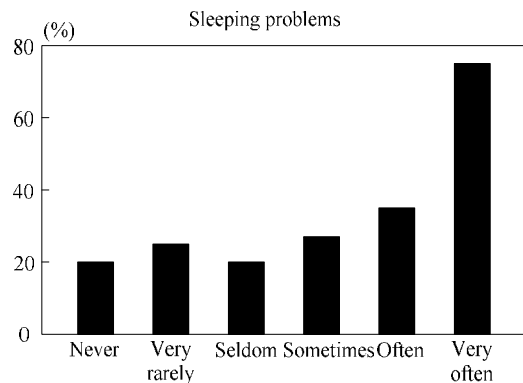


Figure 2. Sleeping problems

Source: JanBen, & Nachreiner, F. Flexible Arbeitszeiten. Bremerhaven: Wirtschaftsverlag Nordwest. 2004; JanBen, D. & Nachreiner, F. (2004). Health and Psychosocial effects of flexible working hours. Journal of Public Health-Revista de Saude Public, 38(suppl.), 11-18.

According to the survey (Figure1) in 2004, employees who worked regular timetable and never changed or seldom changed their working time got the lowest percentage of the sleeping problems (over 20%). Not surprisingly, however, compared with the workers who worked the irregular time were more easy to suffer from the sleeping problems, such as insomnia, low sleep efficiency, shorter sleep period, wake up early, problems in sleep duration, poor quality, and fatigue. Approximately

80% of very often changed their working time employees sleep not well. Because the flexible working structure, part-time employees usually do not have the same high sense of responsibility and accountability for what their jobs as full-timers do (Kretschmer and Bloom, 2009). Hence, after this restructuring, the client company might suffer a decrease in productivity and quality of work in the workplace.

3. Conclusions

The report has found that long working hours negatively affect employees' well-being by threatening their physical and mental health. Although the restructuring plan of having a flexible working hours will benefit employees' health, it is not likely this plan will bring more benefits than harms to the organization, if the factors of reduced employee commitment and increased labor turnover are considered.

4. Recommendations

In order to solve the problem faced by the client company, two recommendations are provided:

The company should cultivate a culture that highlights quality rather than the quantity of time worked, which could encourage employees to be the same productive with fewer hours worked, for example, holding activities twice a month to help the employees release their tense, to alternate work with rest ,then raise the efficiency Working one day at home during a work week. The company should leave 30 minutes every morning during 10:00-10:30 to let the employees do some necessary exercise, such as: eye-protecting exercise or stretching exercise. Because after a whole day work the employees would take care of their families, so they could not have time to do sports. Forcing them to take some exercise in the company probably can help them release the tension.

The company could recruit more full-timers and at the same time offer flexible working programs to full-time employees, such as giving them the privilege of working one day at home during a work week.

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