

THE EFFECTS OF OVERTIME WORK ON ROMANIAN MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES

BUCUREAN Mirela, COSTIN Mădălina

University of Oradea

mbucurean@uoradea.ro, mcostin@uoradea.ro

Keywords: overtime work, effects, managers, employees, organization

Abstract: In the last decade, a lot of scientists were preoccupied by the relationship between overtime work, job performance and commitment. This is particularly important because working overtime is seen as causing increasing stress among workers, having as a result a lower profitability for the organization. In this study we made a research from which we wanted to find out if Romanian managers and employees work overtime and if they are aware of the danger that overtime work can produce both for them and the organization.

1. THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF OVERTIME WORK

Overtime work means each hour of work in excess of eight hours in a day or in excess of forty hours in an administrative work week that is officially ordered and approved by management and is performed by an employee. It is work that is not part of an employee's regularly scheduled administrative work week and for which an employee may be compensated. Some managers work more than sixteen hours a day, getting up early, leaving the office very late at night, and taking plenty of calls on the drive to and from work. [<http://www.nyt-om-arbejdsliv.dk/2omtale.aspx?itemID=1286>]. The result of all this makes it difficult to have any personal time to relax and recharge your batteries, that's why you will not be able to be productive and in the same time motivated. The same situation happens with the employees: after a day of hard work, they have a need to recuperate from the induced fatigue. Because employees who work overtime put in greater effort and more time, they have less time to recover.

Overwork and stress can be damaging and costly for managers, employees and the entire organization.

The terms stress and overwork are commonly heard in the business world. Even though some people believe that stress helps them work better and working lots of hours is great, it's actually damaging to both your health and your business performance. Almost all the time, people that work a lot, even if they are managers or employees, are seen as heroes in the business community, but not allowing time outside of work can have numerous negative effects. [Gheorghevi, Teodora, *Combaterea stresului la locul de munca*, Editura Cartea Universitara, 2006, p. 21]

Even if individuals think that stressful work environment helps getting everything done, they might need to think about health for a moment. People who experience chronic stress are more likely to develop stomach problems, sleep problems, heart disease, depression, obesity, and skin conditions such as eczema. Our body cannot distinguish between physical and psychological threats, so if we are stressed over our busy work schedule, body is likely to react as it would in a serious life-or-death situation. [Living, Susan, <http://www.susanliving.com/common-employee-health-issues/stress-overwork-affect-employer-employees-health>]

Most of the recent statistics has reported an increase in stress-related disorders. They also report that the number of hours of overtime work has increased. Some of the effects were demonstrated and regard increased risk for stress related diseases, shorter sleep, greater fatigue and impaired performance. However, there is a lack of knowledge on the effects within individuals.

Although working very long hours is linked to an increased risk of certain types of health and safety problems for managers and employees, other factors such as previous health problems have a much stronger effect on overall health, safety, and productivity, suggests a study in the February Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. [Yearwood, Carlton, http://news.cnet.com/The-overworked-workplace/2010-1071_3-281532.html]

Chronic and acute stress can cause difficulty with concentration and memory. Studies show that individuals subjected to stress have more difficulty with short-term and verbal memory, and stress makes it much more difficult to pay attention to detail, causing careless accidents and problems with work. When a person is experiencing chronic stress or overwork, they often find it almost impossible to relax both mentally and physically. As they lose sleep, their body and mind are put under even more stress, which only adds to the problem. [Little, Nan, http://www.anxiety-and-depression-solutions.com/wellness_concerns/stress/effects_of_stress.php]

2. WHY DO PEOPLE WORK OVERTIME?

Negative consequences of working overtime pose something of a paradox. Assuming that people are not completely passive victims of circumstance, they must have some hand in their working overtime, some reasons for doing it. How is it possible that people voluntarily expose themselves to reduction in their wellbeing?

First, people may have to work overtime in order to earn some threshold value necessary for a minimal existence. If they did not work overtime, they would be destitute.

An alternative explanation of why people may voluntarily expose themselves to well-being reducing activities (including overtime) comes from a “social rationality” approach. This approach is based on the idea that social circumstances heavily influence how people make decisions, what they pay attention to, what they include in their decision making and what they fail to consider.

[http://dissertations.ub.rug.nl/FILES/faculties/ppsw/2007/p.e.van.echtelt/05_c5.pdf]

The reason for this is that the payment of every extra hour will heavily influence what people attend to. When overtime is paid, people are enticed to make explicit choices about working overtime and to look at overtime mainly in terms of “money versus leisure time” (even if they also have other reasons for working overtime).

We made a survey on six firms from Bihor county and we applied two questionnaires on 8 managers and 98 employees. The first question was: Do you work overtime? The results are as follows:

Managers		Employees	
No overtime	-	No overtime	-
1-8 hours overtime	7	1-8 hours overtime	76
9-19 hours overtime	1	9-19 hours overtime	18
20 hours overtime or more	-	20 hours overtime or more	4

In the same questionnaire they had to answer the question “Why do you work overtime?” by using a scale from 1 to 10 for some sentences. We put the sentences in the order that they had chosen.

Managers	Employees
I feel that only I can handle tasks that I should be delegating.	Due to excessive volume of work.
I must control all the subordinates work during the day.	For fear of losing my work.
I can better focus on the important problems in silence.	In order to respect the established deadlines.
The phone does not call so often during the overtime work.	That way I can be noticed and have the opportunity to promote.
Because I really love my job.	For extra paying.
Because almost all of my collaborators work overtime.	I prefer to work after the departure of my colleagues.
Because I want to represent a good example for my employees.	I have no choice. It is informally imposed by management.
I never have time to respect my schedule.	Additional work is part of the organizational culture.
I have a lot of business meetings.	Because I love what I do.
Other reason.	Other reason.

3. SUGGESTIONS FOR MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES TO AVOID DAILY OVERTIME WORK

Because almost all of the respondents knew all the effects of overtime work, but considered that there is no solution for faster resolution of organizational problems, we decided to give them some recommendations [<http://www.doi.gov/hrm/pmanager/er8d1a.html>,<http://occmed.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/kqn141v1>]:

1. Make your daily routine.
2. Do things that require maximum brain capacity when you are rested enough.
3. Set your deadlines for all tasks and meet them!
4. Do not delay important but unpleasant issues because you will block your mind.
5. Remove everything that is not important, more so-called problem resolve itself when you ignore them.
6. Fix some periods of time when you do not want to be bothered.
7. Group your similar activities.
8. When you start something, take it to the end.
9. Do not divide your work into pieces because you will lose the overview and it lasts much to reconsider them.
10. Make some breaks when you consider that you are less efficient.
11. Be selective in what you accept, learn to say no, ask yourself if you are the right person for that task.
12. Use the 60-40 rule: Plan only 60% of your time, leaving the rest for questions and surprise events.
13. Add 50% more time than you think each task takes.
14. Let some time between planned actions.

Romanian employees are dissatisfied with the time spent at work and the consequences of this situation on life and health. Managers should create the link between organization and employee goals. Without goals, people become busy. Everything seems important, urgent and 80% of working time will be consumed in solving 20% of tasks. [Botezatu, Gabriel, <http://www.wall-street.ro/articol/Economie/14297/61-dintre-romani-muncesc-atipic.html>]

Career rise is one of the topics that concern employees, regardless of age or position where they work.

The need for recognition of their capabilities is the reason why they want to advance. Specialists, sociologists say that an employee's performance who work overtime remains the same as an employee's working in similar working conditions, but during the normal eight hours. [<http://www.articlesbase.com/human-resources-articles/how-stress-and-overwork-can-affect-your-success-1343395.html>]

When an employee spends too much time at work and / or when, being at work is concerned about family or personal problems, then find themselves in a situation of imbalance. The same imbalance is also present when the employee thinks about work issues during leisure or when spending time with family.

As far as employees are concerned, without payment, overtime work can easily become a source of frustration and conflicting feelings.

When asked "why is most often required the overtime work?" some experts reached the following conclusion: the employees work extra hours because they receive extra tasks, because they have to be attentive to details, because they depend on other colleagues work or because they have too many responsibilities for the post they occupy.

Delegation of tasks is part of the management by results methods. A manager has a goal to reach. He should be aware that he will never achieve it alone, but only with the team. [Chisu, Viorica, Ana, <http://www.capital.ro/articol/managerii-buni-x15f-tiu-s-x103-cumpere-timp-de-calitate-109198.html>]

Stress can be reduced by some variables such as social support, better business organization, an effective communication, a well paid and a secure job.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In order to reach performance, workers need to use the right tools and methods. It is necessary that managers know exactly employees' capabilities and what style drives optimal performance. They also need to be sure that they receive good feedback around everything that drives optimal performance, such as: using the last technology, the right tools for the job, the environment in which tools are used and efficient leadership.

The solution for employees is to increase their sources of satisfaction and to decrease those of dissatisfactions. Satisfactions or dissatisfactions are crucial in the decision of keeping or leaving a job. Otherwise, there appears stress.

A manager must know to organize, to be empathic, to sell enthusiasm, to create a good environment, an atmosphere of working in an organization, which will encourage creation, development. If managers do this, the rest of the people will work with pleasure.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Gheorghievici, Teodora, *Combaterea stresului la locul de munca*, Editura Cartea Universitara, 2006, p. 20-25
2. Yearwood, Carlton, http://news.cnet.com/The-overworked-workplace/2010-1071_3-281532.html, accessed on 24.02.2010, at 21:36
3. Țarcă, Naiana, Țarcă, Ioan, *Web site for the information management of a research team*, *Analele Universității din Oradea*, Tom XVII, Facultatea de Științe Economice, 2008
4. <http://www.articlesbase.com/human-resources-articles/how-stress-and-overwork-can-affect-your-success-1343395.html>, accessed on 25.02.2010, at 23:00
5. Little, Nan, http://www.anxiety-and-depressionsolutions.com/wellness_concerns/stress_effects_of_stress.php, accessed on 23.03.2010, at 23:46
6. Botezatu, Gabriel, <http://www.wall-street.ro/articol/Economie/14297/61-dintre-romani-muncesc-atipic.html>, accessed at 24.03.2010, at 01:35
7. Chisu, Viorica, Ana, <http://www.capital.ro/articol/managerii-buni-x15f-tiu-s-x103-cumpere-timp-de-calitate-109198.html>, accessed at 15.01.2010, at 00:14

8. http://dissertations.ub.rug.nl/FILES/faculties/ppsw/2007/p.e.van.echtelt/05_c5.pdf, accessed at 12.03.2010, at 14:06
9. <http://www.nyt-om-arbejdsliv.dk/2omtale.aspx?itemID=1286>, accessed on 23.12.2009, at 15:37
10. <http://www.doi.gov/hrm/pmanager/er8d1a.html>, accessed on 16.04.2010, at 23:21
11. Sato, Yiuji, Miyake, Hitoshi, Theriault, Gilles, <http://ocmed.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/kqn141v1>, accessed at 11.01.2010, at 01:50
12. Living, Susan, <http://www.susanliving.com/common-employee-health-issues/stress-overwork-affect-employer-employees-health>, accessed on 17.04.2010, at 14:19