

well-being

@work

Report

Workshop Stockholm

12th June 2009



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Agenda

9.00 - 9.15 Project Presentation
Hans Preinfalk – AKOÖ, Linz, Austria

I session

From Work Injuries and Stress & Burnout to Sustainable Work Systems – New focus in Working Life Research

9.15 - 9.45 – Presentation: Prof. **Kenneth Abrahamsson**, Programme Director, Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research

9.45 - 10.00: Prepared comments

10.00 - 10.45: Discussion

10.45 - 11.00: Coffee break

II Session

Job insecurity: Implications for work motivation and well-being

11.00 - 11.30 – Presentation: Prof. **Magnus Sverke**, Department of Psychology, Stockholm University

11.30 – 11.45: Prepared comments

11.45 - 12.30: Discussion

III session

Participation and dialogue in management processes

13.00 – 13.30 – Presentation: **Per Tengblad**, labour consultant/researcher, ATK

13.30 – 14.00: Prepared comments

14.00 – 14.45: Discussion

14.45 - 15.15: Coffee break

Concluding session

The Search for the Super Work-force – Concluding Remarks

15.15 - 16.00 – Presentation **Roger Mörtvik**, Head of Research Department, TCO

Participants

Kenneth Abrahamsson, Kerstin Ahlberg, Bo Barrefelt, Mats Essemyr, Ulrika Hagström, Waltraud Haslinger, Ulrich Heisig, Asa Johansson, Asa Kardelind, Christina Kien, Salvo Leonardi, Lennart Levi, Fredrik Movitz, Roger Mörtvik, Hans Preinfalk, Skaidre Zickiene, Magnus Sverke, Roger Syrén, Per Tengblad, Lyuben Tomev, Greet Vermeulen, Enger Wahlberg, Annika Zika-Viktorsson, Piotr Hetmanczyk

Project Presentation

By Hans Preinfalk, AK OÖ

Presentation of the Work Climate Index

Session I

From Work Injuries and Stress & Burnout to Sustainable Work Systems – New Focus in Swedish Working Life Research

By Prof. Kenneth Abrahamsson, Programme Director, Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (www.fas.se)

Contributions to the discussion

Ulrika Hagström (TCO)

Experiences in work play a significant role. How to treat old people? Labour market in Sweden is very gender segregated, women often work with people.

Kenneth Abrahamsson (FAS)

Well-being@work. First we analysed technical issues, bad environment, chemical expositions then there were the social relations (colleagues). Then the managers, time stress, determinate work load – self exploitation is as high risk. It is important to have representative power to say: I can not take more! Work overload can cause depression. How can you control that?

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Presentation shows the interconnection of what is happening in labour related policy. Research in this field is always connected to group interests. The government puts away research from the trade unions and the results are lost in archives. In Austria the former very influential council of economic advice lost influence. Now you have to connect to interest groups. You have to go to the work place when you try to measure something. Next week in Prag there will be a conference “Working conditions and social dialogue”.

Kenneth Abrahamsson (FAS)

How are Problems generated? Button-up first – safety delegates identified the risks – job enlargement, job rotation and so on. The Research is losing contact with the workplace. Work life balance - now there are day care centres for dogs. Work and life should go together. New methods of benchmarks are needed.

Mats Essemyr (TCO)

Quality of work. The more and better jobs concept – fundamentals of the EU policy. There is a lack of definition of better jobs. What are criteria? What does the academic community define?

Kenneth Abrahamsson (FAS)

Development of a work health accountancy. There are indicators but work place health indicators are mostly negative (dignity, task rotation, team work). Everybody is looking for the better job.

Bo Barrefelt (Ministry of Employment)

There is a new report of marking work place - state labour inspection of the work place. The focus is to see the positive effects of work environment. Concentrate more on the positive effects. Good work is good business. End of good work? That is to negative. I think the concept of good work is still alive. It is important to show that good working environment is not only good for the workers also for the business. Work environment as a competitive factor. Two focuses: First try to handle the social inclusion. Find ways to get people back to work. Second too see work environment as a competitive factor.

Kenneth Abrahamsson (FAS)

A lot of the research was concentrating on the unhealthy conditions. It is necessary to recreate the trust between social partners and politics.

Salvo Leonardi (IRES)

There were experiences in the early 90s of change in the work environment. The production Uddevalla tried job enrichment. Workers could remain one hour on one work compared to other companies it was only 1 to 2 minutes. That experience failed. Also in Sweden it returned to the tradition of 1 minute, back to Taylorism. In Sweden the experience disappeared.

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Kenneth Abrahamsson (FAS)

The cause was the trend that one worker could build the half car. Cost efficiency was the reason for failing, especially in the industrial sector but it has given stimulations in various fields.

Frederik Movitz (Stockholm University)

It was not cost efficiency. It was better for the workers but the problem was that this plant was not fitting into the production chain. When you have a globalized production chain it cannot function that way.

Session II

Job Insecurity: Implications for work motivation and well-being

By Prof. Magnus Sverke, Department of Psychology, Stockholm University (www.psychology.su.se)

Focus of department: Work motivation, changing of environment in organisation, commitment to trade unions and participation

Contributions to the discussion

Mats Essemyr (TCO)

Connection of job insecurity with employment situation. Job insecurity is higher in temporary jobs. The job insecurity should be higher among this group. Is this the case? Because people with temporary contracts are prepared that their contracts are ending. Where is the job insecurity higher?

Magnus Sverke (Stockholm University)

Temporary employees also hope that they get the chance to transform the temporary contract to a permanent one. The wishes are there for the future. Permanent employees react more negatively when they experience job insecurity.

Mats Essemyr (TCO)

What is job insecurity? You just do not know what will happen?

Kenneth Abrahamsson (FAS)

“A risk is stronger than its realisation”. Normally you would get a brief information. Life long job security is better than insecurity. But what is an optimal perception between more job insecurity, or people are not happy with their job and don't want to stay 10 years?

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Magnus Sverke (Stockholm University)

More job security is good. Are we experience a gradual shift between worker and employer? Career research shows that even if people would view an unwanted change or interruption of career, afterwards for same this was an important changing point - "Being locked in the wrong job".

Salvo Leonardi (IRES)

Concept of Rousseau – the traditional employers relationship. You have to put a soul inside and you withdraw the workers security. Flexicurity is just part of a semantic and political trick.

Questions to the presentation concerning the increase of union member ship: In times of major job losses the members increase? The more insecure people feel the more members?

Magnus Sverke (Stockholm University)

The trend can not be predicted. People are more participating union in crises of unemployment but they withdraw the union when they feel betrayed. You lose some members, but for example the computer sector joined the union during the crisis in the 90s.

Employers devotion of loyalty. The management practice in the 90s was called empowerment. Now you have the situation that people would die for their organisation. Stress changed because you can always improve a product. When is something finished? Maybe they have lost their expectation what a good job is.

Ulrich Heisig (IAW)

We had a survey on long term employment in fast changing organisations. We thought they would have to create careers outside the firm. So we looked for firms in the military sector. There are people who are not interested in a long-term career. But we didn't find anyone.

Magnus Sverke (Stockholm University)

What is the balance? Creativity concerning long-term employees is declining, that factor is well known. If someone is interested in outside careers, you need a system of Flexicurity.

Lennart Levi (Riksdagen)

100 Mio People will get unemployed in the EU. Once they are kicked out how can you prevent illness?

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Magnus Sverke (Stockholm University)

Some findings have problems to hit the market (for example dignity and respect). Development centres are one aspect (active labour market policy), strengthen their self believe is still a hard question. Some of them tend to blame their union rather than the employer.

Chistina Kien (SORA)

Short time workers have really high job insecurity. Do you have any data? Work intensity has increased; do you have any findings to that phenomenon?

Magnus Sverke (Stockholm University)

Concerning work intensity I know Brandon Work insensitivity and Torge Kristensen. I don't know any studies on the job insecurity of short time workers.

Lyuben Tomev (ISTUR)

Temporary workers. Trade unions are under pressure that the employment gets more and more flexible. The new member states of the EU do not think it is useful for them, because of the lack of security system (AL). We have to introduce the so called temporary work agencies. I think it is dangerous. What is the experience with temporary work agencies and what is the correlation with well-being@work?

Magnus Sverke (Stockholm University)

Also in Sweden they have problems as well. Part time should be avoided. The safety net is important.

Section III

Participation and dialogue in management processes

By Per Tengblad, labour consultant/researcher, ATK

PDM= Participation dialogue in management process

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Contributions to the discussion

Comment of Fredrik Movitz

The Missing Aspects (?)

My understanding of the overall project: to investigate a European benchmark measure.

Missing 1

- More forms than content. Form is a potential that needs to be filled with process.
- More on dialogue than actual influence. Participation is necessary but not sufficient for power.
- More institutions, managers and representatives than workers. Participation is a means, not an end in itself. But where are active workers?
- More formal than informal. Much power and influence outside formal decision processes.

Missing 2

- More representative than direct.
- More collective than individual.
- More on participation itself than its outcomes.
- More description and classification than explanation and mechanism driven.

Hans Preinfalk (AK OÖ)

Arbeitsklimaindex - who do you ask? What picture are you painting? The one of the trade unions or of the workers? During the conservative-freedom party coalition in Austria the AKI rose. How that can be? The Austrian work force did not have the same effects than the trade unions leaders. It did not reflect the sentiments of the trade union. Three years later we had the largest demonstration over pension reforms and a growing number of unemployment. We were asking the right questions and the right people.

Salvo Leonardi (IRES)

Sweden, Germany, Austria have a high participation rate. These systems seem to function well. That compromise was based on loyalty, on company side as well. How can your system function with so much pressure due to the globalisation? When the companies try to escape from the regulations and move to other countries. What do you do? Can they influence the strategic decision?

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Per Tengblad (ATK)

Sweden has been traditionally very globalized. Our car industry for example is American.

Concluding session

The Search for the super work-force - Concluding remarks

By Roger Mörtvik, Head of Research Department, TCO

Contributions to the discussion

Lennart Levi (Riksdagen)

What to do?

Roger Mörtvik (TCO)

Re-establish work life research. It is more difficult to monitor. One thing that is combining all things is that they have an odd school history. Education is more and more important another solution would be an alternative labour market.

Every crisis we have is the same. A group gets kicked out of the labour market and never comes back. In the 90s we failed to uphold employment in the public sector. We did not stimulate the public employment with investment.

Mats Essemyr (TCO)

In Sweden it is extremely important that we have a high employment rate. Everything depends on the high employment rate.

Hans Preinfalk (AK OÖ)

Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz in Austria. Companies rather pay compensation than employ a person with a disability. Alternatives to this law are currently discussed.

Salvo Leonardi (IRES)

Jobs are demanding. Comparing with what? Which expectations are meant with the conclusions in the presentation? We work less now, fewer days than in the past. It is clear that factories look different now than in the past. So with what are you comparing your data?

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Roger Mörtvik (TCO)

From Swedish perspective it is compared with before the crisis in the 90s.