

**ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT POLICY (THE WORK STYLE
REFORM) IN THE CASES OF DEATH FROM OVERWORK IN JAPAN
DURING THE SHINZO ABE ERA (2012 -2020)**

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS



**UNIVERSITAS
ISLAM
INDONESIA**

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**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INDONESIA**

2024

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Proposed to the Department of International Relations

Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences

Universitas Islam Indonesia

As partial fulfillment of the requirements to earn a

Bachelor Degree in International Relations



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AUTHORIZATION PAGE

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Defended in front of Board of Examiners
in the Department of International Relations
Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences
Universitas Islam Indonesia

As a partial fulfillment of requirement to earn
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Date
21 June 2024

Validated by

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Universitas Islam Indonesia
Head of Department


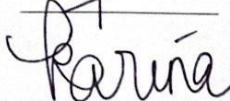
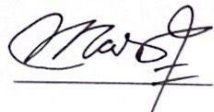


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STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I hereby declare that this undergraduate thesis is the result of my own independent scientific work, and that all material from the work of others (in books, articles, essays, dissertations, and on the internet) has been stated, and quotations and paraphrases are clearly indicated.

No other materials have been used other than those contained. I have read and understood the university's rules and procedures regarding plagiarism.

Making false statements is considered a violation of academic integrity.

Wednesday, October 4th, 2023,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Ferdian Allam', written in a cursive style.

Muhammad Ferdian Allam

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ABSTRACT

Japan's Labor Style Reform Bill was presented during Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration with the intention of addressing the problem of excessive overtime and encouraging a better work-life balance. Using David Easton's theory of systems to analyze inputs, outputs, and feedback mechanisms, this research looks at how the bill is being implemented and what effects it will have. Contrary to the provisional reasoning, the bill's implementation issues and current gaps render it ineffective. Findings, however, indicate that the measure has sparked beneficial reforms, such as businesses providing flexible work schedules and capping overtime hours. There is evidence of a progressive improvement in working conditions despite conflicting public reactions, with some emphasizing the necessity for tougher enforcement and others appraising the advances. This study emphasizes the challenges involved in implementing such policies and how crucial it is to keep an eye on things and make adjustments as needed to get the desired results. The research also gives suggestions for future policy development and a thorough knowledge of the bill's effects.

Keywords: Work Style Reform, overwork, *karoshi*, companies, mobile working, Japan's Government.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The term "death from overwork," or "karoshi," refers to a condition that has been present since the 1960s in Japan. It describes workers who pass away from heart attacks, strokes, and suicide—all conditions linked to overwork. Workplace practices, economic constraints, and cultural and social standards all play a part in the high frequency of karoshi in Japan (Nast, 2021).

The concept of *ganbaru*, which translates to 'do your best' is one of the key cultural factors that contributes to karoshi. This cultural value encourages employees to work long hours and prioritize work over everything else, often at the expense of their health and well-being (Winata, 2018). Many Japanese workers also face economic pressures that make it difficult to take time off or refuse overtime work. This is especially true for workers in industries where long hours are the norm, such as manufacturing and construction.

In Japan, death from overwork is a serious problem that has significant ramifications for human rights. Poor working conditions, excessive overtime, and long work hours can all lead to illness, death, and physical and mental exhaustion, all of which can be violations of the rights to life, health, and decent employment. (Kanai, 2009). The Karoshi issue has been recognized by the Japanese government, and they are trying to address it. But there are still concerns that the government has not properly protected the rights of workers. Critics say that the government's efforts have been limited in their reach and have not sufficiently

addressed the fundamental causes of this phenomenon, which include excessive workloads and the culture of overwork.

A number of social movements, like POSSE, were prompted by the ILO to fight for the rights of workers in Japan. POSSE itself, who has a meaning a group of people who have a common characteristic, occupation, or purpose. With this term, it is explained that they are a group of people who have the same goal, which is to fight for labor rights. To coincide with the annual November Awareness Month for Prevention of Death from Overwork, the POSSE, which deals with labor issues, will hold a support event in Tokyo on the 19th to introduce cases where workers' compensation claims have been approved and where bereaved families have won lawsuits against companies. In this event they have a goal for people not to give up in silence. Since its establishment in Tokyo, POSSE has dedicated itself to helping thousands of individuals improve their working conditions. The group works with labor unions, lawyers, non-governmental organizations, and civil society groups to protect workers' rights. They offer assistance with problems related to the job, including excessive hours, low pay, unpaid wages, hazardous environments, accidents at work, harassment, bullying, discrimination, and subpar living situations. For employees in need of guidance and support, POSSE also provides a helpline. They stress the confidentiality of all contacts and that no information will be shared with third parties, such as employers, coworkers, or governmental organizations, without the employee's permission.

Japan has the highest cases of unpaid overtime work among other countries. Longer unpaid overtime can be explained by weaker regulations on paid overtime.

For example, Japan has weak regulations on overtime work and low premium rates, while Germany has strict regulations on the maximum number of working hours in a day. Regarding unpaid overtime, the gap between Japan and other countries widens because the number of working weeks in a year is greater and the number of leave days is less in Japan. Slightly more than one-tenth of men's annual working hours consist of unpaid overtime in Japan (Mizunoya, 2018).

The main objective of the Work Style Reform Bill's enactment was to address the widespread demands of excessive overtime work, which has long been a source of worry in Japan's labor market. Proposed changes to the Labor Standards Act, which aimed to revise the limits of permissible working hours, were at the core of the measurement. The maximum amount of overtime that may be worked under the revised framework was restricted to 45 hours per month and 360 hours annually, indicating an intentional effort to reduce excessive work and encourage a more balanced approach to managing work and personal obligations. Strict penalties were set for business found to be in breach of these restrictions in order to ensure compliance, highlight the necessity of maintaining the required boundaries and promote an accountable culture in the workplace (Japan Labor Issues, 2018).

This argument is important as it highlights the broader topic of how the country is defending the human rights of employees against the backdrop of a globalized economy where extended working hours and health problems related to overwork are increasingly widespread. Death from overwork is considered a human rights issue since it entails the violation of multiple fundamental rights recognized under international law. For starters, it violates the right to life,

because employees who die from overwork-related causes are frequently denied the opportunity to live a full and healthy life. Article 3 of the International Declaration of Human Rights declares that "everyone has the right to life, liberty, and the security of person." (OHCHR, n.d). Second, death from overwork is frequently associated with violations of workers' rights to safe and healthy working conditions. The International Labor Organization (ILO) acknowledges the right to safe and healthy working conditions as a core concept and a fundamental right at work. Employers violate this right, which is recognized in several international treaties and conventions, when they fail to provide safe and healthy working conditions (VOA, 2021).

The issue of overwork may be viewed as a violation of workers' rights to work-life balance, which is acknowledged as a vital part of decent labor. When people are compelled to work long hours without proper breaks or relaxation, their ability to balance their professional and personal life suffers, resulting in a variety of poor health and well-being repercussions. As a result, the karoshi issue is crucial not just for its influence on worker health and well-being, but also for its implications for the preservation of fundamental human rights (North, 2016).

Matsuri Takahashi, a 24-year-old employee of Dentsu Inc., caught the attention of Japan's media when she committed suicide in 2015. When Takahashi passed away, it was said that she had worked incredibly long hours, including weekends and holidays, during her less than a year at Dentsu. According to her family members, Takahashi had been experiencing anxiety and sadness because of her workload. She had even shared her troubles on social media. Following an investigation into her death, it was found that Takahashi had worked more than

the legally permitted amount of overtime - 105 hours - in the month before she died. According to the complaint, Takahashi was also subjected to verbal abuse and harassment from her managers who told her that she wasn't putting in enough effort at work (Justin, 2017). This example is notable because it demonstrates how overwork may have serious, even deadly, implications for employees. It also drew attention to the subject of *karoshi*, or overwork-related mortality, which has long been a problem in Japan. Since this incident, the Japanese government has enacted new labor rules aimed at tackling the issue of overwork, but many say that more needs to be done to safeguard employees from the negative impacts of overwork (Edubirdie, 2022). The government approved the Work Style Reform law in 2016, with the goal of encouraging a more flexible and family-friendly work culture, reducing excessive overtime, and improving work-life balance (Kantei, 2017).

The reliance of the Japanese government on legislation and suggestions to counteract *karoshi* are among the main points of controversy. Many opponents claim that these restrictions are not adequately applied, and are failing to restrict the number of hours individuals and allow ample rest and recuperation time (Sugimoto, 2020). Some opponents say that the rules and regulations in Japan do not address the underlying causes of overwork and *karoshi*. These include elements a culture of long working hours and a focus on loyalty to one's employer, which can make it difficult for workers to defend their rights or take time off when needed. To address these underlying concerns, some suggest that the government should take more aggressive actions to promote work-life balance and encourage businesses to emphasize employee well-being (Weygandt, 2022).

The above outlines the possible negative effects of long work hours and job-related stress on individuals' well-being and health. It's worth noting that there are only a few recorded incidents; however, there may be others that haven't received as much attention or documentation.

1.2 Research Question

How is process formulating The Work Style Reform and have the policies been proven to produce good results?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective(s) of this research is (are):

1. The main objective of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Japan's policy-making process from its input to its output. Through an examination of the surrounding legal and policy framework, the government's compliance with international human rights standards, and the effectiveness of its measures in protecting workers' human rights, this thesis seeks to find out how the government is dealing with the phenomenon.

1.4 Research Scope

The research scope covers cultural differences, work culture, legal frameworks, economic considerations, occupational health and safety practices, social support systems, and comparative case studies to understand overworking in Japan during the Shinzo Abe era in 2012-2020. This timeline provides a current

and relevant investigation of overwork-related deaths in Japan. By concentrating on the period of Shinzo Abe's leadership, the author hopes to collect the most recent statistics and information on the occurrence of karoshi.

Another reason why the author wants to discuss this time period is because the Japanese government has recently issued a fairly significant and arguably new policy. During his time as Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe made many significant changes to laws to address the karoshi issue. The "Work Style Reform Law," which was passed in 2018, was one of the most significant modifications. The long-standing problem of overwork in Japan was intended to be addressed by this historic piece of legislation.

The Work Style Reform policy was only issued in 2018 and basically regulates working hours for employees. The Work Style Reform program broke with established labor standards by instituting severe guidelines limiting working hours, overtime practices, and enforced rest breaks. The policy's fundamental goal was to build a more sustainable and employee-centric work environment, with a heavy emphasis on establishing a healthy balance between professional and personal duties. The author of this study intends to find out whether there has been any development since the issuance of the policy.

The Shinzo Abe era was chosen because it provides a feasible time frame for data gathering and analysis within the scope of this thesis because Shinzo Abe has served as prime minister for a long time. A long time period ensures access to pertinent information, papers, and research studies, allowing for a thorough evaluation of the selected instances.

Longer working hours and job-related stress are a result of Japan's strong work ethic and societal expectations, as well as its competitive economy. Knowing the legal landscape, including labor regulations and their implementation together with the presence and effectiveness of social support systems, could help in revealing the disparity. The use of case studies facilitates the identification of fundamental factors associated with the incidence of overwork-related death in Japan.

1.5 Literature Review

In his journal "Japan's Extreme Work Culture", David Bracke explains that Japan has a long history of extreme work culture, which has been blamed for a number of health problems and death. But in recent years, there have been signs that this culture is starting to change. One of the most significant changes has been the passage of a law in 2017 that caps the number of overtime hours that employees can work at 100 per month. This law has been met with mixed reactions, with some businesses complaining that it is too restrictive and others praising it for helping to improve employee health (Bracke, 2022).

According to Tetsuro Kato in her journal in *The Political Economy of Japanese 'Karoshi'*, the Japanese Company System is frequently cited as a possible example of a democratic, participatory workplace. However, the 1993 World Labor Report by the International Labour Organization found that overworked Japanese workers were experiencing Karoshi (death from overwork). In 1990, the average working hours in Japan was 2,124 hours per year, which was 500 hours more than the average in France or Germany. Only official statistics that were accessible at the time were used in this comparison. The so-called

service overtime-work (unpaid overtime-work), company-size disparities, team-based competitiveness among employees, weakness of unions, and a lack of government oversight over private enterprises should all be taken into account when analyzing the actual working conditions in Japan.

In a journal written by Yusy Widarahesty entitled "A Critical Analysis of Japan's Toxic Work Culture", she analyzes that Japan has had a very excessive work culture for a long time. As an example of Japanese work culture, superiors create an integrated control structure based on hierarchy to organize and supervise their employees. Discipline is needed in this situation. In addition, authority is exercised through special licenses that influence each other, and instructions are issued from within rather than from outside. Power held by certain laws and processes results in a chain link.

Ronald J. Burke states in his journal, which was published in the Journal of Business Ethics, that putting in hard labor in a corporation had reached a new level. He said that a number of variables have contributed to an increase in the number of hours worked, and as a result, incentive to work hard has also risen. Additionally, he said that working too many hours and developing a job addiction were bad for the employee, the business, and even their families. Millions of individuals in Japan are now working excessive hours with little job security. However, the karoshi issue is not exclusive to Japan. Overtime is frequently distributed unjustly in other countries, for example, with some employees working lengthy hours while others are left with little or no labor. This can result in stress and burnout, both of which have major health repercussions (Burke, 2008).

In conclusion, karoshi is a complicated social dilemma as it is rooted in the nation's strongly established work ethic and the unrelenting expectations made on its labor. But in recent years, Japan has seen a spike in programs meant to deal with this problem and bring about positive change. This study is unique in that it places a strong emphasis on closely examining how Japan's policies have turned out. The author aims to answer the complex question of whether these initiatives have actually made a difference or, on the contrary, have made the problem worse. The author intends to give new insights that might help in understanding the efficacy of government measures in combating "karoshi" by focusing on this important component, signaling a break from traditional studies of this prevalent phenomenon.

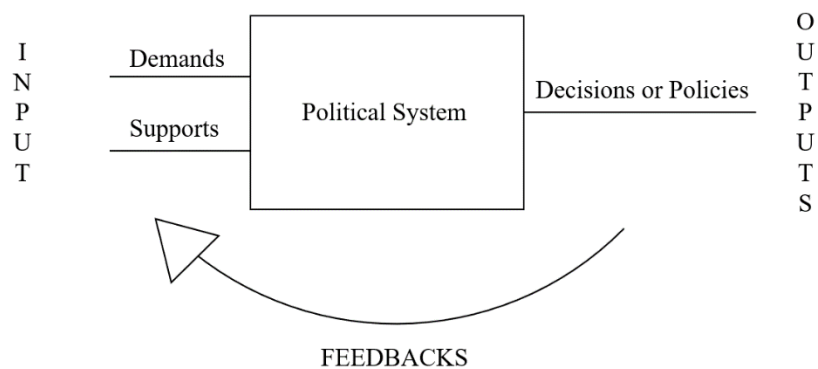
1.6 Research Framework

David Easton has developed a political system model for the study of political systems. This Easton model, or Easton's policymaking process, is seen as a "black box" that converts public requests into policies. Pay and working hour standards, educational possibilities, recreational facilities, roads and transit, and so on are examples of public demands (Ensid, 2023). Support is defined as energy in the form of activities or organizations promoting or opposing a political system. Participatory support like voting, political discussion, following the law and rules, and so forth are examples of material aid.

David Easton's policy making approach is best understood in the context of his systems theory of politics. A political system, according to Easton, is a complex, interrelated set of factors that interact to preserve equilibrium in the face

of external and internal forces. When applied to policy making, this concept implies that policy decisions are part of the overall functioning of a political system. The policy-making process is informed by input from a variety of sources, including people, interest groups, and political parties (Easton, 1957). Decision-making procedures inside government institutions create and formulate policies, which serve as the political system's concrete outcomes.

Picture 1. David Easton System Analysis of Political Life



Source: Easton, David (1957). *An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems*.

David Easton's policy theory has several indicators of analysis that are key to the theory. Easton's behavioral approach to politics states that a political system may be viewed as a defined and fluid (changing) sequence of decision-making stages. The environment creates many needs from various sections of society,

such as a reservation system for a certain group, a demand for improved transportation, and so on. This is divided into several stages, namely:

1. Demands & Support : Through political action, such as voting or activism, demands and support are transmitted as inputs to the political system. These inputs are processed by the political system, which then responds with policies and choices, demonstrating the dynamic connection between the external environment, societal expectations, and the functioning of the political system.
2. Decisions or Policies (Outputs) : Rivalry pushes the political system to make decisions or "outputs" that address or satisfy specific parts of the larger social or physical environment. In essence, when different groups advocate for their interests and compete for power, the political system reacts with policies and actions that have an impact on the external setting, demonstrating the dynamic interplay between social pressures and political results.
3. Outcomes : After a choice or output (e.g., a specific policy) is made, it interacts with its environment, and if the environment changes, there are "outcomes."
4. Feedback : When a new policy interacts with its surroundings, the results may create new demands or supports, as well as groups in favor or opposition to the policy ("feedback"), or a new policy on a related topic.

With these indicators, the author has analyzed the policies and system of politics of the Japanese government in handling cases of death caused by overworking.

1.7 Provisional Argument

Japan has acknowledged the serious issue of *karoshi* or death from overwork, and developed many government initiatives targeted at resolving this vital issue between 2015 and 2020. These policies were developed within the context of Japan's distinct political system and were influenced by rational choice decision-making procedures. To author's preliminary findings, several of these measures have resulted in beneficial outcomes in terms of lowering overwork-related mortality, increasing work-life balance, and boosting worker well-being. But still, the success of these programs varies, and their long-term influence is still being investigated. This research looked at the specific policies put in place during this time period, analyzed their results, and considered the consequences for worker welfare and policy-making procedures. The social and cultural forces that impact a political system are referred to here as the environment. The environment may include a high-pressure work culture, a competitive labor market, an aging population, and public knowledge of *karoshi*.

The demands and support aimed at the political system from the outside world make up the input. The need for improved working conditions from *karoshi*-affected workers and their families is one of the factors that has gone into Japan's *karoshi* regulations. There are a number of ways to make this need known, including petitions, demonstrations, legal actions, journalism reach, and lobbying. The institutions, people, and procedures that form the political system are in charge of making authoritative decisions and enforcing social standards, with the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare being one of the main organizations. This

organization creates, suggests, and carries out the *karoshi* policies in compliance with legal requirements.

One of the outcomes of Japan's *karoshi* policy is legislation that restricts working hours, offers financial compensation, increases awareness, and applies *karoshi* fines. This legislation contains the Act on Special Measures for *Karoshi* Prevention which was passed in 2014 and updated in 2019. This research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of Japan's efforts to combat *karoshi* and whether these policies have produced favorable results by utilizing the lens of David Easton's policy-making theory, which considers political systems, inputs, conversion processes, and policy outputs. The findings are hoped to shed light on the complicated interaction between policy creation, implementation, and repercussions in the context of overwork-related mortality in Japan.

1.8 Research Method

1.8.1 Type of the Research

In this study, the author used a qualitative research methodology for finding research data. Qualitative research is a kind of literature-based research that prioritizes description and analysis.

1.8.2 Subject and Object of the Research

In this study, the research subject is Japan's Government as the government is the actor in this policy-making. The object of this research is Japan's government policy, the Work Style Reform bill.

1.8.3 Method of Data Collection

This research employed a literature study which consists of primary and secondary methods. In the primary method, the authors examined the official website of the Japanese government for information related to the country handling the impact of this violation of human rights. The data focused on literature and analysis. In the secondary method, the writer collected and selected articles, journals, or books that are in line with both countries actions in tackling climate impacts as research topics so that they can help and complete their research. The author selected information published in the mass media, news, internet, and other sources which could be verified.

1.8.4 Process of the Research

The research process was carried out by selecting data based on reliable sources, such as journals, books, articles, reports. In the data collection carried out in this research process, the primary data was from the official report of the Japanese government, and secondary data was taken from news, reports, and other research. After the data had been collected, the author sorted the data to be used in the analysis by linking the subject and object related to this case with David Easton's theory. The research process has also ensured the answers obtained have clear sources to quote. The author selected the sources in accordance with the topic in question to ensure the formulated problem could be answered and a conclusion could be reached.

1.9 Thesis Outline

In Chapter 1, the author explains the background, objectives, significance, scope of the research, literature review, theoretical basis, provisional arguments, and methods used by the author to support this research. Chapter 1 is the opening information of this research.

Chapter 2 discusses the inputs and demands voiced by the Japanese public aimed toward the government. This chapter discusses expectations placed on politicians by the population, concentrating on their calls for improved working conditions, reduced overtime, and greater mental health support.

Chapter 3 discusses the results and policies made by the Japanese government in response to popular requests, with a particular focus on the Work Style Reform Bill. This chapter evaluates the particular policies proposed, such as limitations on overtime and the promotion of flexible working arrangements, and assesses their implementation and effectiveness..

Chapter 4 contains the the closing of the research and any limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

Political Landscape and Demands: Unraveling the Foundations of the Karoshi Issue

2.1. Influence from Domestic Culture

According to Easton's theoretical framework, inputs are the essential components of the political system's support and demands. Demands are the expressed requirements and wishes of the people that make up the political community. When these demands are applied to the Karoshi context, they take the form of passionate appeals from the general public and labor organizations for radical changes to working conditions, shorter workweeks, improved employee mental health support systems, and stronger labor laws. In essence, these requests are the clarion call of society for a thorough review of the current framework in order to adequately tackle the widespread problem of Karoshi.

On the other hand, supporters represent the common beliefs and worldviews that people have about the current system. There is a strong cultural focus on diligence and unshakable devotion to one's work in Japanese culture. Because it connects with the deeply rooted concepts of lifelong employment and business loyalty, this cultural value maintains the existing system. Another factor maintaining the status quo is the normality or acceptance of longer workdays by society. These inputs, which include both supports and demands, are essential in shaping the political landscape and affecting policy choices pertaining to Karoshi. They serve as the social dynamic factors that compel the political establishment to take notice and respond. But it's critical to recognize that these inputs are dynamic and evolve throughout time in reaction to new needs and

societal views. The Karoshi issue is dynamic by nature, which emphasizes its complexity and presents a recurring obstacle that the Japanese political system must effectively resolve.

2.1.1. Key Milestones of the Issue

A few major events influenced the political debate inside the Japanese administration. The realization that workplace stress is a health risk represents a major breakthrough in the field of occupational well-being. This realization has led to a significant increase in study efforts that are intended to clarify the complicated causes and broad impacts of stress at work. The increased awareness of the significant influence that work-related demands can have on an individual's psychological and physical well-being has not only raised awareness of occupational stress but also cleared the path for a more sophisticated and nuanced approach to managing this important aspect of public health.

In 2014, the Act Promoting Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork was established, marking a significant legislative effort in Japan to address the critical issue of karoshi. The primary goal of this act is to reduce the number of deaths and injuries resulting from excessive workloads. It places a high priority on thorough research, studies, and the systematic management of information related to fatalities related to overwork. The overall goal of this law is to promote a shift in society toward a healthy work-life balance, allowing people to be productive and fulfilled without sacrificing their well-being. By highlighting these measures, the act hopes to create an environment where

workers' health and safety are a top priority, reflecting a progressive approach to labor reform in Japan.

The knowledge of disease risk factors has also changed because there has been a significant pattern change in the understanding of disease risk factors, which has challenged the conventional wisdom that states that some habits, such as drinking, smoking, and exercising, are entirely personal decisions. This research highlights the important role that socioeconomic factors: work stress and social class, in particular which is play in shaping these health-related behaviors. This change represents a turning point in the conversation around *karoshi* especially when it comes to the effects of work-related stress. In the past, decisions to smoke or engage in excessive drinking were seen as personal ones. However, an increasing amount of research suggests that these behaviors are strongly associated with social characteristics, particularly the widespread impact of socioeconomic status and work stress.

Families of those who have died from overwork have harshly condemned a report that a government labor reform group adopted on Tuesday. They contended that the proposal's monthly maximum of 100 hours of overtime may essentially legalize excessive workdays, endangering the health of employees. The 68-year-old leader of the national network of families of those who have died from overwork-related causes, Emiko Teranishi, has pointed out that the panel's suggestions for restricting overtime have a lot of flaws in them. The council, headed by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and tasked with reducing overtime and advancing work-life balance, suggested putting in place a number of curbs on overtime. It also suggested enacting sanctions on businesses that

break these rules for the first time. The relatives of Karoshi victims are nonetheless worried about the possibility of exploitation and the sufficiency of the safeguards in place in spite of these actions (Otake, 2016).

In the *karoshi* issue, chronic stress at work can lead to unhealthy coping strategies, which might take the form of bad habits like smoking, binge drinking, sleep disturbances, being sedentary, or isolating oneself from others. These coping strategies have the potential to damage the body over time and increase cardiovascular risk factors. Moreover, the body retains stress chemicals like cortisol and adrenaline as a result of extended exposure to chronic stress. These persistently high hormone levels have the potential to gradually weaken the body's circulatory systems, leading to diseases including heart disease, strokes, and hypertension if left unchecked.

2.1.2. Stakeholder Involvement

To help shape this policy, there are several key stakeholders involved in addressing the issue. The first example is the Japanese government. The Japanese government has taken the initiative to address the crucial Karoshi issue. Karoshi has been officially acknowledged by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare in two different forms: death from physical weariness and suicide caused by mental health issues brought on by overwork (Joy, 2023). Alongside this formal acknowledgement, emergency protocols that are intended to reduce the occurrence of Karoshi have been released. Also, laws designed to prevent excessive overtime have been implemented; nevertheless, detractors argue that these laws are ineffective because of recurring loopholes.

The Labor Organization also has a crucial part in this. The International Labour Organization, a crucial United Nations body tasked with creating worldwide labor standards and promoting social protection and employment opportunities, has become a key player in the international response to the Karoshi issue. The ILO has been at the forefront of this campaign and has significantly improved global awareness (ILO, 2013). This goes beyond simple acknowledgment since the organization has taken an active part in publishing critical information through articles and case studies that detail the wide-ranging impacts of an excessive workload on workers' health. By means of its publications, the ILO has strengthened the discussion around Karoshi and established itself as a reliable source of insights into the subtleties of this widespread issue. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has played a significant role in raising awareness of the numerous issues surrounding longer workweeks and the toll they have on worker welfare across the world by carefully documenting actual events and their aftermath.

Professor Hiroshi Ono's scholarly contributions have indirectly influenced the development of a policy which has led to remote work in Japan. Professor Ono discussed in a journal that Japan is culturally not in favor of remote work. He underlined how advantageous remote work is for promoting work-life balance and avoiding overwork (Ono, 2022). This needs to be considered because Japan also needs to look for ways to lure more people to work in order to raise the country's working population. Japan is experiencing a demographic catastrophe in which there is a population contraction brought on by aging populations and falling fertility. Therefore, work-family balance and quality of

life could be improved through shorter workdays, which may pave the way for increased fertility (Ono, 2018).

Furthermore, public participation plays a critical role in bringing about a paradigm change in the dominant way of thinking. Considering how ingrained the Karoshi issue is in the cultural fabric, a slow and thorough shift in society views is necessary. Changing the collective consciousness is a complex process, and heading down this transformative path requires public involvement. The public's perception and understanding of Karoshi is crucial in bringing about concrete change. Despite the complex relationship that exists between workplace culture and employee well-being, there is a growing acknowledgement of big negative social effects from excessive overtime practices. More and more people are deciding to leave corporate positions where excessive work is customary, which is having a significant impact. Known as “voting with their feet”, this represents a concrete form of protest and firm position against an ingrained culture that could jeopardize their well being.

2.2. Demands and Support

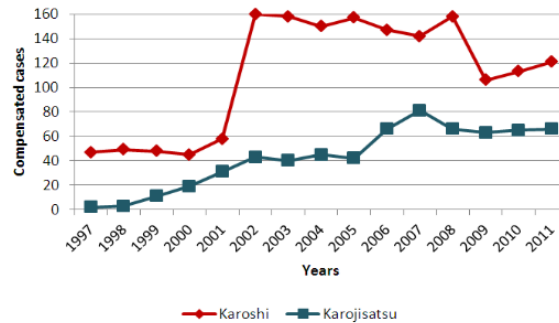
Not much data has been released by the Japanese government due to one of the factors being a lack of awareness of Karoshi. However, there are some cases of approved data issued by the International Labor Organization that can be a reference. Japan is facing an issue: a large-scale underuse of the yearly vacation time that is provided to its well-known and hardworking labor force. As per the most recent government data, there was a noticeable trend in the workforce. In

2018, employees used only 52.4% of their allocated paid leave (Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, 2018). This statistical finding reveals a more broader picture of dominant work culture by highlighting an important gap between the amount of vacation time people are receiving and their actual use of it. This unwillingness to accept paid leave in its entirety highlights the complex forces at work in Japan's professional environment, raising possible concerns for workplace dynamics and individual well-being.

POSSE, a non-profit organization in Japan that offers policy research, provided consultation for workers or labors, on its own initiative, as part of its advocacy role in the creation of this law. By consulting with and publishing articles and research that the organization has conducted on its own, it offers help in the form of public awareness-raising, particularly for workers who may be exploited by their own companies. Numerous publications have revealed that there is a lot of people working overtime without receiving compensation. One of the publications released was that there was an employee from the company Cores Security Company, where he almost worked overtime, almost 150 to 200 hours per month (Konno, 2017). POSSE also issued the magazine "POSSE Vol. 34 Special feature: Countermeasures Against Death from Overwork in the post-Dentsu Incident" which outlined ways to counteract death from overworking. They also explained how the labor inspections administration changed after the karoshi incident with a Dentsu employee (Hasan, 2017). POSSE also published a magazine explaining the policy reform entitled "POSSE Vol. 35 Special Feature: Work Style Reform".

2.2.1. Incidences of Karoshi

Graph 1. Number of compensated cases for Karoshi and Karojisatsu



Source: International Labor Organization World Day for Safety and Health at Work, 2013

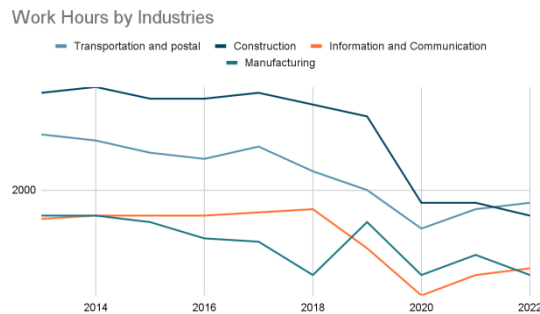
The term “compensated cases” describes circumstances in which the Japanese government publicly recognized and paid compensations for deaths and suicides brought on by stressful working conditions. The number of compensated Karoshi cases climbed from 47 to 121 cases in 2011, while the number of compensated Karojisatsu cases jumped from 2 to 61 cases. This implies that overwork and its severe effects have been an increasing problem in Japan during this time.

The number of worker compensation claims for heart disease due to excessive workload at work has decreased to about 700 after exceeding 800 cases in the 2002 fiscal year. The number of cases fluctuated between 900 cases and a low of 803 cases in 2020, with an increase of cases from the previous year (Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2023).

2.2.2. Working Hours

Working hours are the benchmark for measuring whether change has occurred or not. Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare publishes its working hours, which have changed over the years.

Graph 2. Number of Work Hours by Industry



Source: Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare statistic report, 2022

When considering part-timers and permanent employees individually, the total actual working hours of the former group dropped to 1,948 hours in 2022, which was below 2,000 hours for the fourth year in a row. The total actual working hours of the latter group also decreased to 1,948 hours. The overall amount of hours worked decreased to 955 hours over the course of four years, falling below 1,000 hours (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2023). It is projected that in the medium to long run, the rise in the percentage of part-time

workers will also be responsible for the drop in the total yearly working hours per worker as the proportion of part-time workers continues to rise.

In the medical field, dr. Shingo Takashima's case provides a moving example of the extent of the effect of overwork. He worked over 200 hours of overtime which is the equivalent of continuously working without a break for a consecutive 100 days (Otake, 2023). In 2022, his relentless dedication led to his suicide. The sudden death of dr. Takashima serves as a sharp reminder of the dangers associated with long hours in the medical field.

A similar incident happened in 2013 in the field of journalism. A journalist from Japan's national broadcaster NHK died of congestive heart failure in 2013 (Ma, 2017). Miwa Sado's cause of death was that her heart was so weak that it could not pump blood to all parts of her body. After investigation by authorities and labor advocacy, it was found that she worked overtime for more than 150 hours in the month of her death and also 140 hours in the previous month. She was covering two local elections in news in Tokyo. People who work long hours often feel that it creates a positive image in front of their bosses and colleagues. On the other hand, many companies do not take into account the fact that employees rarely work overtime or work on holidays, and that they return home after completing their work on time (Cabinet Office, 2017).

This author has examined the political environment around the Work Style Reform bill, examining a few of the demands and how they supported the creation of the bill. The wide range of requests made by stakeholders with passionate pleas for better working conditions and stricter labor laws emphasized the urgent need for a change in Japan's labor sector.

CHAPTER 3

Analyzing Policy Implementation and Impacts

This chapter delves into the analysis of the Work Style Reform Bill's implementation and effects. After looking at the political climate, support, and demands surrounding this important piece of legislation in the previous chapter, we now turn our attention to assessing how these laws have been implemented and impacted different aspects of society. The goal was to find the Work Style Reform bill's complex consequences and offer a thorough review of the bill's implementation challenges as well as its achievements. By examining the complex connections between the creation of policies, their execution, and societal responses, this chapter seeks to provide readers with an understanding of the real-world effects of legislative initiatives aimed at creating a more equitable and sustainable workplace. This chapter examines how the public reacted to the measure, and evaluates the key elements and the effectiveness of the enforcement tactics. Through an examination of the bill's evolution from conception to execution, we can recognize its potential and offer insight into how Japan's employment sector is evolving.

3.1. Putting Policies into Practice and Outcomes: Unveiling The Bill

The bill included drafting legislative regulations and guidelines to guarantee the efficiency of equal pay for equal labor and reducing working hours by adopting the overtime regulations by making penalties for those who violate

the regulations (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, 2017). The creation of this law was made as a form of considerable step toward changing the culture of work in Japan. Prime Minister Abe also stated that if they did not draft laws, these laws would not be followed up continuously, and it would remain merely written on paper.

3.1.1. Decisions or Policies: The Work Style Reform Bill

This Work Style Reform proposed revisions of the Labour Standards Act to restrict excessive working hours as one of its main initiatives. Employees are now limited to working no more than 15 hours per week, 45 hours per month and 360 hours of overtime annually under the new legal framework (Japan Dev, 2023). Employers must also make sure that workers have at least 11 hours uninterrupted rest in between work shifts. These steps are intended to protect employees' health and wellbeing by reducing stress and fatigue from excessive work.

The government has tightened work hour laws in order to force compliance with these requirements. Employees can now be penalized for making their staff work longer hours than the agreed upon, which encourages them to obey the revised labor laws. Furthermore, businesses are required to keep precise records of their employees' working hours, and an accurate method of time recording is required. By keeping an eye on and preventing excessive workloads, workers are assisted in avoiding unnecessary stress from working long hours.

Businesses that break labor regulations are put on a blacklist, or “black” corporations, and incur serious repercussions. Companies’ reputations suffer from being on this list, which discourages prospective workers from applying for jobs with them (Funakoshi, 2017). Companies are motivated to follow labor laws because of a fear of being blacklisted, which promotes a legal standards-abiding culture in the workplace.

As the foundation of law, the Labor Standards Act (LSA) is crucial because it establishes fundamental guidelines and rules that govern employment contracts and working conditions across Japan. There are several important clauses, the first being working hours. To protect workers’ health and welfare, the Labor Standards Act has set strict standards for working hours. Employers are generally not allowed to mandate that employees work more than 8 hours a day or more than 40 hours a week, excluding breaks (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2021). But some companies and sectors are excluded, allowing workers to be put up to 44 hours a week, as long as they don’t work more than 8 hours a day. The purpose of these laws is to protect workers’ health and safety while requiring a certain level of productivity.

Employers are required to provide employees with sufficient rest periods to maintain their health and productivity as part of the Working Style Reform Bill, which aims to reduce the dangers associated with the phenomenon. It is legally compulsory for employees who work shifts longer than six hours to have a minimum of 45 minutes break. As for the shifts longer than eight hours, the rest time is increased to one hour. This addresses the detrimental effects of prolonged working hours on employees' physical and mental health and emphasizes the need

of regular breaks to enhance workplace wellness and prevent overwork-related tiredness.

This law also regulates workers who do overtime. The measure requires companies that plan to request overtime from their staff to formally inform the relevant labor standards inspection agency (Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, 2019). If the accountability and openness in overtime agreements is ensured, this Notification of Agreement enables regulatory bodies to efficiently monitor and control adherence to labor rules. Workers who are obliged to work beyond their regular schedule are entitled to overtime pay for the extra hours they put in. Employers are incentivized to limit excessive overtime demands and appropriately pay employees for their extra efforts by offering overtime compensation, which is often greater than normal rates. But there are certain exclusions for particular sectors or professions, such as emergency services, transportation, and healthcare, which can have different policies for overtime. Certain exclusions recognize the particular operating needs of certain industries and seek compromise between the preservation of workers' rights and welfare and the demand for continuing service availability.

3.1. 2. Enforcement Action

To ensure employees' well-being and work-life balance, the Labor Standards Act (LSA) of Japan requires employers to offer at least four days off to workers throughout a four-week period as an addition to the weekly rest day. For example, over a four-week period, an employee may take two days off in a row and then take one day off on other days. This adaptability allows for a diversity of

work schedules and personal preferences, allowing workers to efficiently recharge from their job responsibilities.

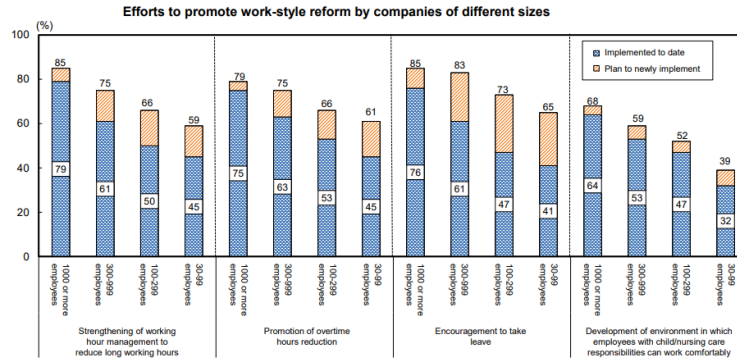
Fujitsu companies unveiled Work Life Shift, an innovative approach designed for the new normal era in 2020, this project concentrates on the life aspect of work-life shift and seeks to capture the core of work-style transformation. Through the use of teleworking, employees in Smart Working maximize their preferred working patterns. Employees are freed from the limitations of working at a set of locations and times thanks to this Smart Working. Fujitsu implemented a highly secure virtual desktop service that facilitates efficient operations, enabling Smart Working. They have developed a new company culture centered on this remote working approach within this teleworking environment. Reviving communication and sharing work progress are part of the culture. These measures have resulted in a drop of 30 hours per month on average in commute time and a teleworking rate of 80% for employees in Japan (Fujitsu, 2022). There have been several instances where workers have been able to interact more effectively with their jobs and their personal lives. With this program, workers have better time management flexibility, which has made it simpler for them to make a side business or combine work and raising children.

Another example of a workforce that applies this bill is physicians in Japan. The biggest challenges for physicians are supply and demand, their unequal distribution, the lack of functional differentiation or cooperation in the regional medical care delivery system, and the way that patients and citizens are treated for medical conditions, even after this bill was into effect (Kenichiro, 2021). Following the enactment of the bill, businesses of all-sizes, from startups

to big corporations, have slowly been putting the policy into practice. This suggests that companies are becoming more aware of the need to address overwork-related concerns and encourage workers to have a better work-life balance. Nevertheless, the rate of implementation differs among businesses; some have already made progress adopting the policy changes into their daily operations, while others are only just beginning to carry them out and are still working through the challenges of adjusting the policies.

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare has outlined a number of efforts to encourage flexible work schedules, eliminate working long hours, and guarantee equal treatment for all employees. The ministry has emphasized how it is going to make the fundamental ideas of the law clear and to provide a thorough and ongoing policy to guide the reforms. The ministry examined and changed rules that encourage long working hours. These changes seek to improve the general quality of the workforce by guaranteeing fairness of treatment for employees who have different employment status or those who choose different kinds of employment. In addition, the ministry is dedicated to upholding employees' rights through paid leave by requiring a set amount of leave days annually with the aim of improving general well-being and work-life balance (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2019).

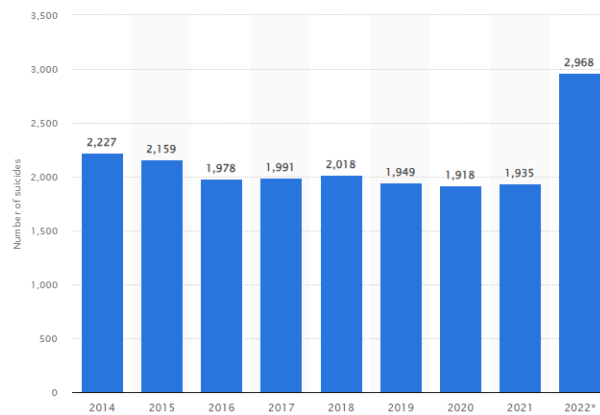
Diagram 1. Efforts to Promote Work-Style Reform by Company Size



Source: Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, 2019

These efforts toward implementation show how business are beginning to recognize how important it is to adopt the values set out in the bill. Companies have had a variety of possibilities and problems throughout the transition process, emphasizing the necessity of continuing cooperation and adaptation to guarantee the successful integration of the policy into working procedures.

Diagram 1. Death Cases due to Overwork in Japan



Source: Number of deaths related to problems at work in Japan (Statista, 2023)

A total of 2,968 people in Japan committed suicide in 2022 as a direct result of difficulties arising from their work environments. This number includes both cases of karoshi and of karojisatsu. This statistical finding highlights the seriousness of the problems related to occupational stress and overwork in the Japanese setting. It highlights the fact that it is an urgent social issue that calls for ongoing efforts to implement comprehensive solutions. Deaths from overwork started to progressively reduce under Shinzo Abe's leadership. But data showed that the number of deaths linked to overwork increased following the Prime Minister's shift. This increase happened in spite of the fact that many organizations implemented work style changes, suggesting that the measures may not have had the desired impact of reducing the incidence of karoshi.

The bill also highlights a few guidelines for the employers regarding working on days off. The Labor Standards Act regulates work on determined rest days, such as public holidays or weekly rest days, to safeguard the rights and welfare of employees. When asking workers to work on their scheduled rest day, employers must follow certain rules established in the LSA. For example, it is crucial to have the employee's permission beforehand. To ensure that workers have the freedom to choose their own work schedules, employers must get the explicit approval of their staff before forcing work on designated rest days. In addition, the LSA requires companies to offer compensating rest days in order to make up for the lost rest time. These paid days off are crucial for enabling workers to rest and recharge, promoting their health and work-life balance. So, to guarantee that workers have enough time off to relax and recover from their job responsibilities, employers are required to arrange these compensatory rest days

within a fair timeframe. Employers may also choose to pay workers extra for the hours they work in order to reimburse them for the work they do on rest days. This acknowledges the sacrifice of their rest time while providing workers with monetary reward for their extra work.

One of the other aspects of this bill is the White Collar exemption system. In Japan, the system of exemptions for white-collar workers recognizes that some specialists, managers, and professionals have special duties that go beyond regular work hours. These people frequently provide contributions that are difficult to measure in terms of hours worked, which makes the usual overtime laws less relevant to their positions. Because of this, qualified white-collar employees are free from the general overtime regulations, which means that if they work above their usual hours, they won't be paid for it or get paid time off. Instead, in line with the nature of their duties, their performance is assessed using results, knowledge, and specialized skills.

Depending on the kind of firm and sector, there are several conditions that need to be met to be eligible for the white-collar exemption. Workers who meet the requirements for this exemption usually possess advanced degrees in fields critical to their work. Qualified vocations include specialists in fields like law or medicine as well as managers overseeing crucial operations. These people frequently occupy roles where their particular knowledge and judgment are crucial to the success of the company. The white-collar exemption system is not without its own difficulties and disagreement. Although it encourages flexibility in work arrangements, there are worries that businesses might take advantage of workers by abusing the exemption for their own gain. Furthermore, it's still

difficult to seek a balance between worker safety and flexibility, especially when it comes to work-life balance. Workers may experience pressure to put in long hours without receiving enough pay or time off, which can result in problems for their health.

3.2. Feedbacks from the Grassroots: How People have Reacted to the Policy

Rollouts

The bill drew a wide range of reactions from different social groups, spanning both positive and negative viewpoints. Some people and organizations strongly disagreed with the measure, expressing worries about possible effects on social values or individual rights. On the other hand, several groups expressed strong support for the law, seeing it as an essential step toward addressing urgent problems or achieving certain policy goals. All things considered, the differing answers emphasized how complicated the current problems are and how crucial it is to have a thorough discussion and participate in the policy-making process.

3.2.1. The Negative Response to the Bill

In an effort to reduce overwork, flexible working has gained momentum thanks in part to the bill. Many businesses allowed employees to work remotely or from home (WFH). However, Hiroshi Ono stated that the Japanese hard-work culture was still highly rigid, and inflexibility at work formed a barrier. The fact that working long hours in the workplace is seen positively in Japan is a sign of dedication and hard work is one of the main reasons why people there still put in long hours. Measures of input, such as tenure and work hours, are also simpler to

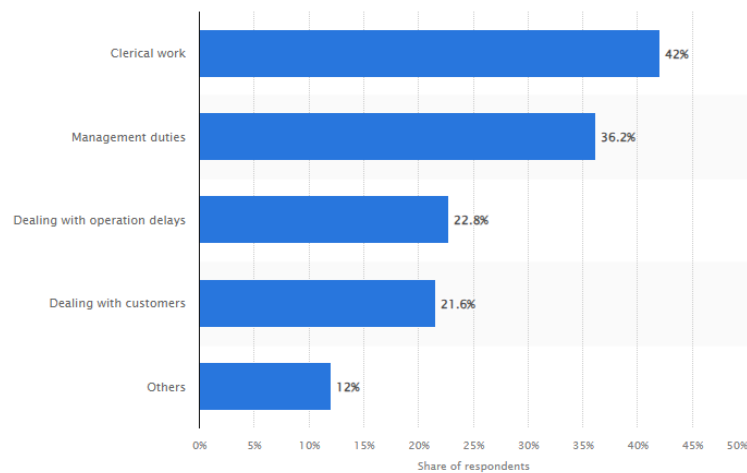
track and observe than measures of outcome. An Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare survey indicated that difficulty in monitoring work hours was the most frequent complaint voiced by companies that used remote work (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, n.d.).

The Work Style Reform suggests equal treatment of all workers. This means equal treatment for regular and non-regular workers by justifying all wages and benefits between regular and non-regular workers. Regular workers usually have permanent or full-time contracts with their employers. They also get quite a lot of benefits ranging from health insurance, pension plans, and even job security because they are less likely to be laid off compared to non-regular workers. In terms of wages, they also get a larger salary and are more likely to get a raise. Unlike regular workers, non-regular workers have many types of contracts, such as part-time and side job agreements. They tend to have fewer benefits than regular workers, with limited health insurance benefits. Even vacation time tends to be limited or non-existent. In terms of job security, they are also more vulnerable to being fired or having their contract terminated.

It is possible that the new policy will have no effect on these two types of workers due to the seniority-based wage system. One of the main causes of the significant pay difference between regular and non-regular employees in the same position is seniority-based compensation. According to the recently released guidelines from the bill, companies must give regular and non-regular employees with the same amount of work experience at the same company the same salary. Stated differently, this bill seeks to pay non-regular employees based on seniority. However, this may not work as non-regular employees don't stick with one

company long enough to enjoy the rewards of loyal services. It de facto justifies the existing salary disparity, mostly by pointing to the regular workers' seniority pay (Yashiro, 2019).

Diagram 2. Manager Challenges After the Enactment



Source: Statista, 2020

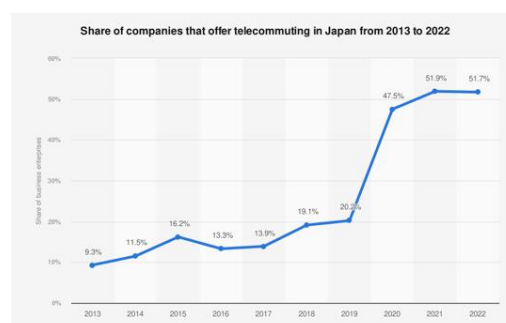
This graph shows that there was a significant increase in management responsibility after the Work Style Reform was put into effect. This illustrates how the reform initiative has a noticeable effect on the amount of work that managers must do in a variety of businesses. This indicates a loophole in the bill where managers have become more burdened due to adjustments because they take over a lot of the work of their subordinates. A survey was conducted by Japanese medical equipment manufacturer Cell Power that examined how middle managers' duties were effected by workplace changes after the reform. The majority, or 58.6%, said that they had increased work demands once the changes were put into place. Of those in this category, 46.6% indicated an increase in workload, and 18% reported a significant rise in job demands (Baseel, 2020).

These results emphasize the complex effects of workplace reforms on management positions in which middle managers in firms are taking on more responsibility and working harder.

3.2.2. *The Positive Response to the Bill*

The public may have criticized the bill, but it has also received support from many parties. Many companies supporting the bill have welcomed the changes it makes, seeing them as a step in the right direction toward promoting a healthy workplace culture and addressing long-standing problems with burnout and overwork. These companies show their commitment to work-life balance and employee well-being by actively advocating for the bill's implementation in addition to enforcing the rules. KOBELCO, a Japanese company that is prominent in iron, steel, and machinery products used in the automobile industry, has openly stated that they aim to create a work environment that brings well-being to their employees by encouraging their employees to take paid leave. They also aim to create a more employee-friendly work environment because, according to them, the benefits of the Work Style Reform bill can only be achieved if there is a change in the work environment and culture in the work place. They also demonstrated that they have reduced the total hours spent on regular meetings by 30% each year, from 571,000 hours in 2015 to 407,000 hours in 2016 (KOBELCO, n.d.).

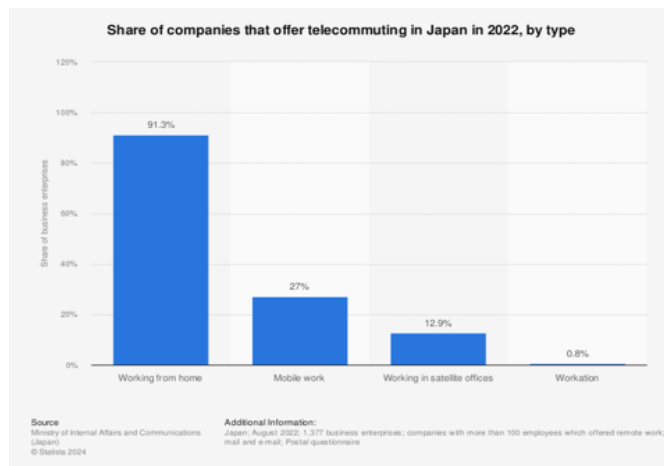
Graph 3. Share of Companies that Offer Telecommuting in Japan



Source : Ministry Internal Affairs and Communication, 2022

The data presented above suggest a significant pattern of compliance to the new regulations by firms, as seen by the growing number of workers who have adopted teleworking arrangements. This move to teleworking can be categorized as an indication of both support for the Work Style Reform and a wider acceptance of flexible work arrangements that improve productivity and work-life balance. On offer are a number of types of teleworking, such as working from home, mobile working, working from a satellite office, and even *workation*.

Diagram 3. Companies that Offer Telecommuting in Japan by Type



Source : Statista, 2024

The data above shows that companies most commonly allow their employees to work from home, and the workation option is very minimal. The desire for remote work is far greater than for working from a satellite office. Another positive response has been noted from Itochu Corporation company which stated that it supports this bill because it is the key to women's progress and

one of the solutions to increasing the birth rate. Itochu Corporation has female employees, but most of them quit their jobs after getting married or giving birth. This is because they feel responsible for their marriage or newborn child, so they decide to focus on one thing only. They support this change in working style because it allows them to work flexibly. The system makes it easy for employees to integrate their own and their children's schedules, including daycare pick-up times. The company also discovered that through implementing morning-focused work-hours, the overall fertility rate, or the expected number of children per woman throughout her lifetime, increased among its female employees. The fertility rate in 2021 was 1.97, which was much higher than the national average of 1.33 in 2020 and 1.30 in 2021 (Itakura, 2023). The release of interview results was a strong testament to the company having implemented morning-focused work, where employees are encouraged to leave work at 17:00 and prohibited from working later than 20:00. If they need more time to complete their work, they can come earlier in the morning. This was confirmed by Muraki Atsuko, who serves on the Women's Advancement Committee at Itochu Corp. After interviewing women who returned to work after giving birth, she said that the system allows them to control their own personal schedules and still work. Last year, Itochu Corp. also implemented working from home permanently for almost all of its employees as a form of implementing the workplace reform.

The Work Style Reform has sparked important conversations in grassroots communities about the need for establishing a healthy work-life balance and pushing for improved worker protections. Although there is hope that it will bring about positive changes, there is also a general recognition of the challenges that

lie ahead in turning policy goals into concrete results on the ground. This subject matter highlights the many viewpoints found in grassroots, demonstrating a shared desire for significant progress, balanced with a realistic understanding of the challenges associated with implementation.

Thus, the findings of positive and negative opinions on Work Style have been provided in this chapter. It's evident that a sizable number of individuals and institutions have responded positively, seeing the potential for enhanced work-life balance, reduced overtime, and more flexible work arrangements. Yet several labor force participants have expressed concerns and issues with the measure's practicality and efficacy. These opposing opinions highlight the difficulties in putting change into practice and the need for continuing debate and adjustments to ensure the measure achieves its objectives.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

One of the key initiatives Shinzo Abe implemented as prime minister was the Work Style Reform, which changed Japan's workplace culture. Reactions to the bill's passing were numerous. The bill was born out of strong support and demands made by people and stakeholders. These inputs included interest for tighter labor rights for workers as well as general public concern about the negative impacts of excessive overtime on workers' health and well-being. On the other hand, societal norms that prioritize long hours and hard labour implicitly support the existing current status, highlighting the conflict between conventional work ethics and contemporary standards for work-life balance.

In trying to address this issue, the government drafted and passed the Work Style Reform. The stronger implementation of work-hour limits, restriction on extra hours, and the promotion of flexible work arrangements were among the key elements. Some applauded the reform because they thought it would improve their lives and protect worker's rights. Others, on the other hand, objected to the implementation, claiming that strict oversight was required because of the several loopholes that allowed businesses to get around the regulation.

This criticism emphasizes how difficult it still is to put policies into practice and guarantee compliance in many different kinds of business. Although there has been some progress in increasing awareness and bringing about change as a result, continued effort is still required in the implementation of procedure

and to fill any gaps that exist because finding the right balance between worker well-being and productivity will depend heavily on the government's capacity to adjust and react to inputs. Some aspects show that since its enactment, many changes have occurred starting from companies offering a variety of working methods and limiting overtime working hours. This shows that slowly there are good results appearing from the policy.

4.2 Recommendations

The author recommends getting more hands-on in researching this topic, by interviewing employees or employers. Conducting surveys and interviews would allow access to more detailed feedback regarding this policy. By understanding the perspectives of both parties, we can gain a better understanding of where the challenges lie in implementing the policy. Exploring how each region implements the policy would provide greater understanding of what the impact is on smaller businesses as well as big companies. It is also recommended that future research focus on specific sectors to understand in more detail how the bill is implemented because it is possible that some sectors experience challenges that are unique and different from others.

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