

Making “unlimited holidays” work at ING: A mixed method approach investigating its effects and boundary conditions

(Social Transfer)

Project leads

Ass.-Prof. Jana Kühnel (jana.kuehnel@univie.ac.at)

Abstract

Autonomy is a key factor for employee well-being, performance and sustainable working life. In 2020, a large Dutch bank introduced fully paid “unlimited holidays” as a means to increase employee autonomy and happiness. We conducted a randomized controlled trial with quantitative ambulatory assessments and qualitative interviews to not only shed light on the impact of “unlimited holidays”, but also on the why and how “unlimited holidays” can influence individual and organizational outcomes.

Keywords

unlimited holidays, unlimited paid-time off, autonomy, employee well-being

Aims of the Third Mission activity

Goal: Autonomy is a key factor for employee well-being, performance and sustainable working life. In 2020, a large Dutch bank introduced fully paid “unlimited holidays” as a means to increase employee autonomy and happiness. We conducted a randomized controlled trial with quantitative ambulatory assessments and qualitative interviews to not only shed light on the impact of “unlimited holidays”, but also on the why and how “unlimited holidays” can influence individual and organizational outcomes.

Cooperation partners outside the university sector

Firmenkooperation: ING Groep N.V. (Finanzbranche)

Cooperation partners from the scientific/research field

Ass.-Prof. Jessica de Bloom, University of Groningen (Netherlands) & Tampere University (Finland) Prof. Christine Syrek, University of Applied Sciences Bonn-Rhein-Sieg (Germany) Prof. Tim Vahle-Hinz, Psychologische Hochschule Berlin (Germany)

Faculty

Institut für Arbeits-, Wirtschafts- und Sozialpsychologie,
Fakultät für Psychologie

Timeframe

Oktober 2019 - März 2021

Funding	Wirtschaftskooperation
Research basis	The project builds on my research on recovery from work-related stress, employee well-being, and effects of changing working conditions.
Social/economic relevance	Results of this project will inform the company and other companies on how and whether 'unlimited holidays' should be introduced to foster employee well-being, performance and sustainable working life.
Integration into academic teaching/the curriculum	No
Impact	Results of this project will inform the company and other companies on how and whether 'unlimited holidays' should be introduced to foster employee well-being, performance and sustainable working life.
Transfer aspect of the activity	Representatives of the labor union are involved in the project that might result in far-reaching changes in vacation policies (unlimited paid-time off) for employees.
Future orientation & sustainability	Depending on the results of the project, a company-wide (global) role-out is planned.
Achievement of objectives	The project is evaluated throughout the entire term; a mid-term report and final report will be delivered.
Measures to sustain this activity over the long term/expand it	None
Visibility	Website of ING (internal); ResearchGate project; homepages of scientific project team members
Links/Publications	See above