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Thesis Project 1

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Research Problem

In brief, my thesis project is to build a website for employees in the technology industry in China to report their actual work overtime status (how many hours per week) anonymously, in order to use the authenticity of the data to damage or grow the companies' reputation. Hopefully, regulate the working culture in China's technology industry and awaken people's human rights consciousness. My goal in this paper is to illustrate my research problem comprehensively. In other words, to give a full picture of Chinese technology industry regarding demographics and statics, current overwork status, reasons behind.

China has the largest population of technology human resource in the world. According to Luo Hui's article *China's national conditions and capacities*, "by 2014, China had 81,140,000 employees in the technology industry ... Predictably, this data would keep increasing since then. In addition, the demographic structure was pretty young with the average age of 33.73 years old ... Also, female employees occupied 40.5% among the total volume." In terms of employers, according to *39th China's Technology Industry Statistical Report (2017)*, "the country has 91 public technology companies and numerous privately held large, medium and small companies" (cnnic.cn). The majority of the technology companies are centralized in major cities Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. Large cities in China require very high living expense which makes the employees in a harder situation.

Working overtime is a normal in China's technology industry. Although the legal working time ruled by Chinese law is 40 hours per week, most companies require their employees work much more the standard without paying extra compensation. The law also claims

Generally, overtime working cannot be longer than one hour per day. Even due to exceptional reasons, the overtime working cannot be longer than three hour per day or thirty-six hours per month ... Compensation for overtime work should be 150% pay on weekdays, 200% pay on weekends and 300% pay on legal holiday (mohrss.gov.cn).

In fact, “68% of employees work over eight hours a day in the technology industry”(China Tech Insights). Horrifyingly, certain extreme companies require employees work for 996 which is a mock phrase among the industry, standing for working 9 am - 9 pm, 6 days a week. For that reason, some employees even bath in the washroom and sleep in the office. In recent years, China's news exposed few long-time overwork young employees had sudden death. The health, stress and happiness issues of all employees are really serious problems need to be concerned.

The key factors of the phenomenon are clear but the improvements are weak. By analyzing the chart (see fig. 1) and based on my own observation, the top reasons are both due to extreme competition in the industry. Under the national trend of economic transformation from manufacture-based to technology-driven. A broad range of opportunities had been opened to both established companies and startups. Company leaders are eager to pursue capital interests so the workload has been put on the employees' shoulder. The employer side is always much mightier than the employee side as young people need to stay on jobs. Especially in China, if one person

rejects a company's overworking convention, the person will easily be replaced by another people from China's tremendous human resource. From another perspective, the public departments doesn't tend to fix the issue but chose to be silent as the government indeed wants to see the dramatic economic growth so put the human rights at the second place.

Which of the following explains why you work overtime best?

	A	B
1	Reasons for working overtime	Proportion
2	Seasonal workload peak period	39.3%
3	The supervisor assigned too much work	31%
4	The company or leader requires to work overtime	30.7%
5	Improper work flows and inefficient communication	27.6%
6	Most colleagues are working overtime	25.8%
7	Spending time to achieve self-improvement	13.8%
8	Don't have much spare time plans	12.8%
9	Can't accomplish tasks on time due to low efficiency	9.6%
10	Work for overtime allowance	6.9%
11	To skip rush hours	5.5%

*Everyone can choose at most four reasons for this question, so the figures add up to more than 100%.

Fig. 1. Danielle Li. Overworked and Underpaid: prosperity at the expense of well-being in China's tech scene. 17 October 2016. www.chinatechinsights.com

To sum up, China has the most technology industry employees in the world working in vast Chinese companies; most employees work overtime without earning extra pay which is against the law; industry competition and government's indulgence remain and facilitate the problem.

Works Cited

39th China's Technology Industry Statistical Report. 22 January 2017. www.cnnic.cn

China's working time standard. 24 November 2010. www.mohrss.gov.cn

Luo, Hui. "*China's national conditions and capacities.*" Beijing Association of Science and Technology. August 17 2016. www.bast.net.cn