

More is less: a four-day workweek

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Abstract

It is commonly believed that reducing the workweek to four days might decrease productivity. However, studies have shown that employees can maintain or increase their productivity levels in alternative work environments, which challenges the traditional relationship between work hours and output. Findings from various studies showed that implementing a four-day workweek could lead to greater job satisfaction, increased morale, and productivity, and reduced turnover and absenteeism. Nevertheless, it could also result in work intensification and stress for employees, potentially leading to burnout. However, studies revealed that flexible working reduces the risk of burnout. The theoretical foundations of these implications are also discussed. Studies have shown that the type of industry, the kind of organizational culture, and particular leadership style all play an important role in determining the effectiveness of work flexibility. The paper underscores the importance of ongoing research and a further exploration of mediators to inform the successful implementation of flexible work policies, recognizing the dynamic interplay between organizational factors and employee well-being.

Keywords: flexible working, four-day workweek, productivity, work intensification

Introduction

The traditional five-day workweek has long been the standard in many workplaces, shaping the rhythm of professional life. However, as the work landscape continues to evolve, alternative arrangements, such as a four-day workweek, are gaining attention for their potential impact on employee well-being and organizational dynamics. Despite common perceptions that a four-day workweek might lead to reduced productivity, studies have revealed that, on average, employees maintain or even improve their productivity levels, challenging traditional notions about the relationship between work hours and output (Campbell, 2023). Consequently, many companies are offering their employees options for a four-day workweek, or other flexible working arrangements. Flexible working can refer to an alternative time or place of work.

Its primary characteristic is that the employee chooses the working arrangement rather than the employer (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). Flexible working covers a wide array of working patterns, such as reduced hours, non-standard hours, various forms of remote working, and compressed working time.

A four-day workweek is a commonly discussed form of work flexibility. A four-day workweek is a schedule where full-time employees work four days per week, instead of the usual five, while still earning the same salary (Cooks-Campbell, 2023). Other forms of work flexibility, like reduced hours and compressed working time, could be equated to a four-day workweek and therefore have the same outcomes, regardless of who oversees the schedule. The difference between compressed work and a four-day workweek is that in compressed work employees work the standard 35 to 40 hours in less than five days, whereas a four-day workweek has employees working less than the standard hours (Cooks-Campbell, 2023). The concept of a reduced workweek emerged in the 1950s when Walter Reuther, an American civil rights activist, haggled over a four-day, 32-hour workweek (Hartman & Waever, 1977, as cited in Campbell, 2023). According to Bird (2010), it was only in the 1970s that the enthusiasm about the four-day workweek erupted. However, the enthusiasm lasted less than a decade. The interest is now growing back, and many countries, such as New Zealand, Spain, and Japan, have already implemented the four-day workweek or are seriously considering implementing it (Campbell, 2023). This could be because employers are starting to focus on employees' well-being, or because of technological advancements. About 75% of the 505 companies in the United Kingdom, surveyed by Walker and Fonitha (2019), recognize the importance of offering flexible working to their employees, and 50% of them claim that they offer a four-day workweek to all, or at least some of their employees. According to Cambell (2023), employees have many benefits from the implementation of the four-day workweek, such as less stress and increased morale, but organizations do not implement it only for the sake of their employees. Theoretical foundations, such as the social exchange theory, explain how employees reciprocate the benefits they get by being more productive and committed to the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). As the four-day workweek becomes more popular, it is crucial to examine the consequences it has on employees, the employer, and the environment.

The purpose of this review paper is to critically examine the existing literature on the implementation of a four-day workweek, with a primary focus on its impact within the realm of organizational psychology. The review will explore the theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and practical insights related to

the adoption of compressed work schedules. By synthesizing and analyzing the available research, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the psychological implications of a four-day workweek on employee well-being, job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational dynamics. Additionally, the review will highlight gaps in current knowledge and propose avenues for future research in the field.

Theoretical framework

To truly grasp the implications of the four-day workweek, it is important to explore the theoretical foundations that support this evolving concept. The four-day workweek is a shift away from traditional work structures and is rooted in organizational psychology and work-life balance theories. By understanding these theoretical foundations, we can gain insight into how the four-day workweek may affect individuals and organizations in practical terms. Bakker and Demerouti (2016) claim that the *job demands-resources model* explains the impact of the four-day workweek. This model categorizes working conditions into job demands, job resources, and personal resources. Job demands refer to the aspects of the job that require physical or psychological effort, like high work pressure or emotionally demanding interactions. Both types of resources improve job motivation. Personal resources, such as optimism and self-efficacy, refer to the individual's beliefs about their ability to control their environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016). Job resources are aspects of the job that help employees achieve work goals. They can also reduce the impact of job demands. Examples of job resources would be autonomy, skill variety, performance feedback, and growth opportunities. Job resources contribute to positive outcomes like job satisfaction and well-being. Job resources and demands have a reciprocal relationship: job resources can reduce the impact of job demands, but job demands can reduce the impact of job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016). With job demands encompassing aspects like high work pressure and emotionally demanding tasks, the compressed schedule of a four-day workweek could potentially alleviate some of these stressors by providing additional time for rest and recuperation. Moreover, job resources such as autonomy and skill variety are essential for maintaining motivation and satisfaction, suggesting that a well-implemented four-day workweek could offer employees greater control over their work and more diverse tasks to engage with.

Another very important theory for understanding workplace behavior is the *social exchange theory* (Homan, 1958, as cited in Cropanzano & Mitchel, 2005).

Social exchange involves interdependent interactions between individuals that generate obligations for the parties involved. Reciprocity, a fundamental principle in social exchange theory, dictates bidirectional exchanges, cultural beliefs in fairness, and the expectation that individuals adhere to shared standards of behavior to avoid punishment and foster mutual assistance (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In the context of work schedules, employees may view the transition to a four-day workweek as an exchange process, where they weigh the costs, such as longer working hours on those four days, against the benefits, such as increased flexibility or compressed workweeks. The perceived fairness of this exchange is crucial in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors toward the new schedule. If employees perceive the arrangement as fair and beneficial, they may develop trusting and mutually committed relationships with their organization over time. Conversely, if the exchange is perceived as unfair or inequitable, it may lead to dissatisfaction, decreased morale, and potentially negative organizational outcomes such as higher turnover rates. Thus, understanding the principles of social exchange theory can aid organizations in effectively implementing and managing transitions to alternative work schedules like the four-day workweek, by ensuring that the exchange process is perceived as fair and mutually beneficial for both employees and the organization.

Siegrist (2010), analyzes how the *effort-reward imbalance model* explains what happens if the social reciprocity rule is not followed. The model suggests that an imbalance between the effort employees put into their work and the rewards they receive can lead to negative health outcomes. In the context of work schedules, excessive demands without adequate rewards, such as time off or flexibility, may contribute to stress and decreased well-being (Siegrist, 2010). This underscores the importance of ensuring that work schedules align with employees' needs and provide adequate opportunities for rest and reward to maintain a healthy work environment.

The last relevant theory is the *self-determination theory* (SDT) explained by Deci and colleagues (2017). Self-determination theory is a macro theory of human motivation that evolved from research on intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and expanded to include research on work organizations and other domains of life (Deci et al., 2017). SDT focuses on the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in motivation. Work schedules that allow employees greater autonomy and control over their time may enhance intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. On the other hand, rigid schedules that limit autonomy may lead to feelings of frustration and reduced well-being.

In conclusion, understanding the theoretical foundations of the four-day workweek sheds light on its potential impact. The job demands-resources model suggests that a compressed schedule could alleviate stress and offer greater autonomy. Social exchange theory emphasizes the importance of perceived fairness in shaping employee attitudes, while the effort-reward imbalance model warns against excessive demands without adequate rewards. Lastly, self-determination theory underscores the value of autonomy in enhancing motivation and satisfaction. These insights highlight the importance of fairness, autonomy, and balance in successfully implementing the four-day workweek.

Benefits of a four-day workweek

The adoption of a four-day workweek presents a range of benefits for both employees and employers. A meta-analysis by Campbell (2023) studied 31 research papers written in the last 50 years regarding a four-day workweek, including variations with both 32 and 40-hour workweeks. The criteria for selecting research papers included full-text articles with any methodology, specifically about the four-day workweek, and not some variation of it, such as reduced hours. He found that most of those papers reported positive outcomes, such as increased morale, productivity, and job satisfaction, reduced turnover and absenteeism, cost reduction, decreased commuting costs, and easier organizational recruiting. He also figured that these effects may fade over time, primarily because of habituation. Furthermore, in a self-made survey by Walker and Fonitha (2019), 50 companies were examined regarding their experiences with a shortened workweek, regardless of the specific number of working hours. The findings revealed several positive outcomes: skill development, cost reduction (employers reported that employees made fewer car journeys), employee well-being (employees reported feeling less stressed at work), work quality, and productivity. Employees reported they spent more time developing their skills, were more productive, and got more work done that was superior to work during a traditional five-day workweek. However, Wernette (1968, as cited in Campbell, 2023) provides information against the latter. He asserts that despite employees working more efficiently within their designated hours, the produced goods and services remain unable to match those produced in a standard five-day workweek. Wernette (1968, as cited in Campbell, 2023) claims that the reason for this lies in the fact that more workers take on a second job, which increases fatigue. He also argues that employees are often least productive on

the first and last day of the traditional workweek and concludes that the four-day workweek results in just two productive days. However, given the significant changes in technology, labor laws, and organizational cultures since 1968, his arguments may not accurately reflect the potential outcomes of implementing a four-day workweek in today's context.

Studies on flexible working have also shown positive outcomes with reduced hours and compressed schedules. For instance, Kelliher and Anderson (2010) analyzed data from self-made semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire with 37 flexible workers in the IT, pharmaceutical, and consulting sectors conducted for a larger survey aimed at examining the implementation of flexible working practices. The questionnaire included various questions regarding the responder, their working arrangements, and their attitudes and responses to their organization using established scales. Job satisfaction was assessed using Schneider and colleagues' (2003) Overall Job Satisfaction measure. Organizational commitment was examined using Cook and Wall's (1980) British Organizational Commitment Scale and stress was measured using Rose's (2005) measure of Work-Related Stress. Participants received a set of Likert scale replies for every question. During the interview, the questions covered the interviewee's job role, the nature of their flexible working arrangement, their motivation for changing their work schedule, and their experiences with flexible working, including its impact on their work and personal life. Kelliher and Anderson (2010) discovered that both reduced-hours workers and remote workers put in more extensive and intensive effort. Specifically, workers spent more time at work and were more focused on their tasks. The data from the questionnaire showed that flexible workers had higher scores on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In interviews, the employees reported that their satisfaction comes from the sense of control that flexible working gives them. Following the job demands-resources model, the autonomy that employees get by working flexibly results in better well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016).

Eaton (2003) argues that organizational commitment, among other factors, is a crucial contributor to better performance by encouraging employees to be more productive. Organizational commitment refers to an individual's emotional attachment, identification, and loyalty to the organization where they work. It correlates negatively with turnover; the rate at which employees leave or exit an organization and are replaced by new employees is lower if organizational commitment is higher. More accurately, workers who have higher organizational commitment leave the organization less often than workers with lower organizational commitment. Organizational commitment may occur because

employees get the impression that the company cares for their well-being (De Leede & Heuver, 2016).

According to Hill and colleagues (2010), work-life conflict theories propose that experiences in work roles can result in decreased performance in other roles, such as family roles. Therefore, greater work hours could cause more work-family conflict, but Jacob and colleagues (2008) found that that is only the case if workers miss family gatherings because of work. Jones and colleagues (2008) found that the employee's perception that they can work flexibly can cause positive outcomes, such as reduced work-family conflict. This information derives from a self-made survey, conducted on 1601 Singapore workers, which measured work-life fit, perceived workplace flexibility, and used workplace flexibility. However, Eaton (2003) found that it is the usability of the policies that could cause positive outcomes, at least for organizational commitment. Her research uses primary surveys of professional and technical staff from seven biopharmaceutical companies in a single state, which resulted in a survey population of 453 people. Following a thorough interview analysis, the survey approach was selected to collect representative data on important subjects. The survey contained questions about work flexibility and formal, informal ("Are these policies formally available?"), and usable policies in work flexibility ("If the employer offers from one to seven benefits, either formally or informally (or both), does the employee feel free to use those benefits?"). She also argues that some companies offer flexible work arrangements to their employees, but those who take advantage of them could face negative consequences for their careers. Hence, it is not important if flexible working is available, but rather whether it is usable. This difference in the effect of perceived and used work flexibility on outcomes could be because Eaton's (2003) research was conducted in the USA, while Jones and colleagues (2008) was conducted in Singapore. These countries belong to different cultures and therefore value different things. The Singapore workers are more interdependent and could value the fact that their company offers them flexibility more than the actual flexibility of their work schedule. On the other hand, the USA workers are more independent, and they need to use flexibility to benefit from it.

The longer weekends resulting from a four-day workweek offer valuable opportunities for rest and rejuvenation, positively influencing mental health. Vahtera and colleagues (2001) investigated the role of extended weekends on sickness absenteeism in 27 541 municipal employees over 4 years and found that Fridays were the days with the most sick-leaves. This shows how necessary a longer weekend is. Furthermore, the perception of increased autonomy and

control over one's work schedule has been associated with enhanced job satisfaction and a more positive work-life balance (Eaton, 2003). According to the self-determination theory (Deci et al., 2017), the autonomy that comes from flexible working results in intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. These findings collectively highlight the potential of a four-day workweek to foster a healthier and more supportive work environment, positively impacting the overall well-being and mental health of employees.

In addition to the benefits for employees, positive outcomes regarding the company and the environment were also found. A survey conducted on 500 UK companies showed that about 68% of UK businesses that are already offering a four-day workweek reported in the survey that flexible working options help them attract the right talent, save costs, and attract and retain both younger and older employees (Walker & Fonitha, 2021). The environmental benefits include reduced commuting, which results in reduced carbon emissions, and energy savings because of the reduced need for office space (reduced use of heating, cooling, and lighting systems). However, environmental benefits largely depend on the activities that the employees engage in on the fifth day. Walker and Fontiha (2021) found that most of them spend time with friends or family, but a lot of them also go shopping or eat out, which requires the use of a car.

There is also some indication that the positive outcomes of the research should be approached with caution. Although many researchers claim that a reduced workweek increases productivity in employees, some state that the effects on productivity are inconclusive (Delaney & Casey, 2022). The literature Campbell (2023) studied also implies that employees tend to see the advantage of a four-day workweek more as an escape from work rather than as a resource for more effectively addressing their tasks. Moreover, some studies are constrained by a relatively modest sample size, depending on how many employees a company has, for example, Kelliher and Anderson (2010) interviewed just 37 employees. Additionally, a predominant number of these studies relied on self-made surveys as their primary data collection method, an inherently subjective approach (e.g., Eaton, 2003; Jones et al., 2008). Therefore, comparing results should be approached with caution. A common assessment method was an interview (e.g., Delaney & Casey, 2022), which is also subjective, and information derived from it is hard to interpret. The interviews were also self-made, which makes the results hardly possible to compare. It is also important to note that if an employee works hard for their employer, but does not get enough in return, it could result in negative outcomes, such as stress, according to the effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 2010).

Challenges and concerns

While the four-day workweek has gained traction as a promising alternative to traditional schedules, it is important to examine potential downsides that may arise from its implementation. Despite its benefits, this condensed work arrangement is not without its challenges, and understanding the negative outcomes is essential for a comprehensive evaluation of its viability. Issues found with the four-day workweek included worker fatigue, scheduling problems, increased workload on the first day back, childcare problems, an increase in absenteeism and performance management, and intensified monitoring and productivity measures (Campbell, 2023). An already mentioned research by Kelliher and Anderson (2010) investigated how flexible working influences work intensification in three large, multinational companies and found that working reduced hours puts a lot of pressure on employees. During the interview they conducted, the respondent was questioned about their employment, the type of flexible work arrangement they had, why they changed their work schedule, and their experiences with flexible working, including how it affected both their personal and professional lives. Information provided in interviews revealed that workers felt they should get everything done in the time they had available, which resulted in stress (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). Delaney and Casey (2021) conducted a qualitative case study on a medium-large company from New Zealand about their four-day workweek trial, consisting of 32 work hours. 41 employees, working in the financial sector, took part in focus groups, where they were asked about the trial planning process (e.g., "What was the process for determining your productivity measures and work roster?"), the trial experience (e.g., "How did you feel about your work during the eight weeks?", "What were some of the challenges or concerns you encountered?", "How did you experience your day off?"), and lastly, the post-trial reflections (e.g., "How are you experiencing the return to a five-day workweek?", "What were the outcomes of trying a four-day week for you?"). Employees reported heightened stress levels, which could be the result of the requirement for multitasking and additional tasks for which they had less time. All those negative outcomes are connected to work intensification, which refers to the level of effort exerted by employees while performing job responsibilities (Green, 2004).

The intensification of work is the primary challenge encountered by employees who work a four-day workweek, as recognized by most researchers. Interviews that Kelliher and Anderson (2010) conducted did not contain questions about work intensification, however employees started to talk about it themselves in

an implicit manner. This implies that workers have a problem with managing work, and therefore the impact of work intensification should be further explored. Kelliher and Anderson (2010) distinguish between two types of intensification in interviewees' answers: enabled and imposed. Enabled intensification is when employees choose to take on more work due to their motivation, ambition, or personal work ethics. On the other hand, imposed intensification is a situation where external factors, such as organizational changes, increased workload expectations, or external pressures, force employees to work more intensely without their voluntary agreement (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). Kelliher and Anderson (2010) found that enabled intensification is linked to remote working, while reduced-hour workers experienced imposed intensification. When organizations transferred to reduced hours, their employers did not reduce their workload, which pressured employees to put in more effort, both extensive and intensive (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). It is also important to note that reduced-hour workers reported that they feel like they should be available outside their designated hours while the company is operating. However, Kelliher and Anderson (2010) point out that employees did not feel exploited because they worked more. They felt they had to give something back to their employer for letting them work fewer hours. This can be explained with the help of social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This exchange of flexibility in working and intensification of work is reciprocal, and it has developed with time. Employees felt grateful for the employer's decision and wanted them to also benefit from it.

Spicer and Lyons (2022) studied a four-day workweek pilot project in a small town in Canada with 31 workers, while 26 took part in the pilot study. The work hours in this project were not reduced, just compressed to four days. They conducted a small questionnaire with statements in which workers had to give answers on a five-point scale (e.g., "I am proud to work at Zora township"). The statements measured work satisfaction, and residents had to complete it before and after the pilot study. Spicer and Lyons (2022) found that employees have some concerns about their new work life, such as working longer hours, interrupted workflow, fewer direct interactions with their supervisors, and a loss of group cohesion. In conclusion, tackling work intensification is critical when implementing a four-day workweek. Although a compressed schedule can help individuals achieve a better work-life balance, it can also put more strain and stress on them. Maintaining employee well-being and productivity requires strategies to prevent job intensification, such as task management and open communication about expectations. To develop successful implementation

strategies, further research is required to determine the long-term effects of the four-day workweek on organizational dynamics and employee happiness.

It is crucial to acknowledge that work intensification can lead to burnout. Burnout is described by Maslach and Leiter (2008) as a syndrome of tiredness with work that is marked by cynicism, inefficacy, and exhaustion, caused by psychological stressors. To mitigate the risk of burnout, organizations should implement clear workload expectations that align with the compressed schedule. Additionally, promoting a culture of open communication and support can help identify early signs of burnout, such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Lee & Ashforth, 1990). Employers can also encourage regular breaks and provide resources for stress management. However, according to Maglang and colleagues (2021), flexible working slightly reduces the risk of burnout. They surveyed 874 healthcare workers regarding their family demands, job demands, and workplace flexibility, and investigated the relationship between those variables and burnout. Burnout was measured with one question on the survey, and participants answered on a seven-point scale (1 - Never, 7 - Every day). This single-item measure has been validated in other studies focusing on a broad group of healthcare workers. Workplace flexibility was assessed through seven questions regarding their capacity for taking time off work, including vacations, when they work, how many hours they work, whether they can take personal calls while at work, whether they can work from home, and whether they can convert to a part-time schedule, which they had to answer on a five-point scale. The mean workplace flexibility was 1.54, which indicates that most workers did not work flexibly. The results showed that 28,1% of workers experienced burnout, and their mean of perceived work flexibility was 1,48. These results suggest that there is a relatively low level of perceived workplace flexibility among workers (Maglang et al., 2021). Interestingly, those who experienced burnout had a slightly lower perceived level of workplace flexibility, with a mean score of 1.48. The difference was small but significant. This could indicate a potential association between lower perceived flexibility and increased likelihood of burnout among workers. Since the perceived work flexibility in the sample is relatively low, these results should be interpreted with caution. Burnout was also only assessed with one subjective measure, and although it was proved valid, it is hard to conclude based on only one criterion. To mitigate the risk of burnout among healthcare workers, organizations in the healthcare sector should explore strategies to enhance workplace flexibility, such as implementing more flexible scheduling options or remote work arrangements. Future research with a more diverse sample

and more comprehensive measures could provide valuable insights and offer a balanced perspective.

Lastly, it is important to discuss how the industry type affects the four-day workweek. According to Lewis (2005), large organizations and organizations in the public sector are more likely to offer flexible working arrangements than small organizations or organizations from the private sector, because they are more concerned about their image. Walker and Fonitha (2021) also noted that some organizations working in the service sector have problems implementing the four-day workweek because of the need to be available for their customers. The research examined in this paper included various industries, and it is important to examine how they impact the outcomes of implementing a four-day workweek. Most of them studied organizations from different sectors at the same time (e.g., Kelliher and Anderson, 2010; Walker and Fonitha, 2021), and they show both positive and negative outcomes which are hard to separate depending on industry type. Maglang and colleagues (2021) studied healthcare workers and found that those who work flexibly had a lower risk of burnout. Healthcare workers are often overworked, and flexible working could provide positive outcomes. Research conducted on workers in the IT sector also showed positive outcomes, like more organizational commitment (De Leede & Heuver, 2016). On the other hand, Delaney and Casey (2022) found more negative outcomes while studying workers in the financial sector. In the financial sector, where every minute matters and deadlines are paramount, compressing the workweek into four days can intensify pressure and limit crucial time for tasks. This fast-paced environment, coupled with stringent regulatory demands, may amplify stress and hinder productivity, potentially leading to dissatisfaction among employees.

In summary, the implementation of a four-day workweek presents both opportunities and challenges across various industries. While it can promote work-life balance and potentially reduce burnout, as seen in studies involving healthcare workers and IT professionals, its effectiveness may vary depending on the nature of the industry. For instance, in sectors like finance where tight deadlines and regulatory demands are prevalent, compressing work into fewer days may exacerbate stress and hinder productivity, as evidenced by research findings. Moving forward, organizations should consider industry-specific factors when exploring the feasibility of a four-day workweek and tailor implementation strategies accordingly. Future research should delve deeper into understanding how different industries are impacted by alternative work

arrangements and identify best practices to mitigate potential drawbacks. Additionally, organizations could explore hybrid models that combine aspects of flexible scheduling with traditional work arrangements to optimize employee well-being and organizational productivity.

Culture and leadership

As culture influences many psychological concepts, the relationship between culture and flexible working should also be explored. The two most often discussed dimensions of culture are individualism and collectivism which were first investigated by Hofstede (1980). Many psychological concepts can be in a relationship with individualism and collectivism. That is also the case with workplace flexibility. According to Oyserman and colleagues (2002), individualism is based on the notion that individuals are independent of one another. Individualistic cultures prioritize self-orientation and emphasize the importance of freedom, personal time, and challenges. Hence, workplace flexibility is used as a tool for creating harmony in managing family and work roles and emphasizes self-fulfillment and personal autonomy (Oyserman et al., 2002). Personal accomplishments define a person's identity. On the contrary, collectivism is based on the notion that groups bind and that individuals within those groups have reciprocal duties and responsibilities toward each other (Oyserman et al., 2002). Consequently, workplace flexibility might not be seen as worthy due to its potential to prevent group cohesion by reducing face-to-face group interaction. A study by Stavrou and Kilaniotis (2010) investigated the impact of culture on turnover in flexible working. They conducted a questionnaire on 3337 organizations from the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States of America, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. The authors separated these countries into two clusters: the Anglo cluster (the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand) and the Nordic cluster (Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark). The unit of analysis was the organization, and information was provided from the highest-ranking corporate officer. They were asked about flexible working arrangements, turnover, trade unions, organizational sectors (public or private), the market (national or international), compulsory redundancies, and industry type. Turnover was measured as the percentage of employees that left the organization within a year, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Stavrou and Kilaniotis' (2010) findings show that in Nordic Europe, as schedule flexibility increases, turnover significantly decreases. In Anglo cultures, as unsocial hours and part-time arrangements increase, turnover significantly increases. This suggests that cultural differences play a crucial role

in shaping the effectiveness of flexible working policies in retaining employees. Organizations should tailor their approach to flexible working based on cultural norms and values to effectively mitigate turnover and enhance employee retention. The countries chosen for the study represent those clusters well, but they are not representative in general. They are all individualistic, highly developed countries. Although both clusters represent individualistic cultures, the authors argue that they differ in dimensions relevant to turnover: in Nordic cultures, organizations are more employee-oriented and value organizational collectivism, while in Anglo cultures organizations want to maximize their profit (Stavrou & Kilaniotis, 2010).

Another variable that impacts work-life balance is leadership. The implementation of new work practices, such as flexible working or a four-day workweek is causing organizational change, such as the work schedule and structure, leadership, and recruitment. Consequently, organizational designs, structures, and processes are required to become more flexible (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002). De Leede and Heuver (2016) define leadership as a process, act, or influence that prompts people to take action. They claim that some leadership styles are better than others at managing these organizational changes. In their work, different types of leadership are mentioned, such as authentic leadership, transformational leadership, and new-genre leadership, and highlight e-leadership as the most relevant one in the context of flexible working. It aligns with the demands of the digital and remote work landscape (De Leede and Heuver, 2016). E-leadership is a type of leadership where interactions are held online or by phone because individuals or groups are dispersed (Avolio et al., 2009). According to Mathews (2016), new-genre leadership is a modern approach that goes beyond conventional leadership models. It encompasses the qualities of flexibility, cooperation, and a strong emphasis on both individuals and the community, reflecting the changing nature of leadership in contemporary organizational settings (Mathews, 2016).

It is crucial how leaders manage these organizational changes to make flexible working a success, and three aspects of leadership are highlighted as important: empowerment, trust, and steering output (De Leede & Heuver, 2016). However, De Leede and Heuver (2016) failed to find evidence of leadership styles moderating the impact of flexible working on organizational commitment. They surveyed 258 IT workers and measured teleworking, flexibility, productivity, organizational commitment, and leadership. Leadership was operationalized as empowerment (measured based on Spreitzer's (1995) method), trust in management, trust between colleagues (measured based on Cook and Wall's

(1980) dataset) and steering on output (measured with three questions from Ouchi, 1978). Leadership styles did not strengthen the relationship between flexible working, organizational commitment, and productivity. Hence, leadership has a direct effect on organizational commitment and productivity rather than a moderating one. Empowerment, trust in management, trust between colleagues, and steering output all had a positive effect on organizational commitment. Leadership, specifically the factors of empowerment, trust in management, trust between colleagues, and steering output, directly influence organizational commitment and productivity by making it greater. This suggests that these aspects of leadership play a fundamental role in shaping employees' commitment to the organization and their productivity levels, without being influenced or moderated by other factors. These findings propose that the lack of a clear relationship between leadership styles and flexible working practices may be due to individuals choosing their preferred working environment based on their characteristics, which leaders should consider when adapting their leadership styles (De Leede & Heuver, 2016). According to Lewis (2005), managers play a crucial role in the effectiveness of flexible working arrangements within organizations. Their supportiveness can enhance flexible working arrangements, while implicit assumptions favoring traditional work patterns can undermine them. Managers impact flexible working arrangements through their response to non-standard work requests, daily management of flexible workers, and their approach to flexibility and work-life balance. Lewis (2005) argues that policies about flexible working arrangements are vital, but how well they are implemented and used within corporate culture and practices determines their success. Rather than concentrating only on adopting policies, research activities should also focus on how managers and employees use and implement them (Lewis, 2005).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of the four-day workweek has revealed a multifaceted landscape with implications for both employees and organizations. The evidence suggests that a flexible work schedule not only contributes to improved work-life balance and heightened employee satisfaction but also demonstrates potential benefits for organizational productivity and retention. However, a flexible work schedule has some negative outcomes, like work intensification and fatigue. As the modern workforce continues to evolve, the four-day workweek emerges as a viable solution to address the changing dynamics of professional life. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the success of

such arrangements depends on various factors, including organizational culture and effective implementation strategies. The implementation of a four-day workweek introduces complexities, with work intensification stemming from both employee-driven and external factors. A reciprocal relationship, as explained by the social exchange theory, emphasizes the need for fair expectations and support during this transition. Adaptation challenges, including concerns about longer hours and disrupted workflows, underscore the importance of addressing individual employee experiences. Diverse responses to the four-day workweek across different industry types also highlight the need for tailored approaches, recognizing the nuanced nature of each employee's situation. Striking a balance between flexibility and well-being is crucial, as studies show a nuanced relationship between flexible working and burnout risk. Continuous monitoring and adjustment are essential, requiring organizations to remain vigilant to employee concerns and adapt the new work arrangement to ensure sustained success. Further research and real-world experimentation will be essential to refine our understanding of the long-term effects of this innovative work structure. In moving forward, organizations should carefully consider the unique needs of their workforce and weigh the potential advantages of embracing a four-day workweek against the challenges it may pose. Ultimately, the journey towards a more flexible and sustainable work environment requires a thoughtful and adaptive approach that aligns with the evolving expectations and aspirations of the workforce.

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Sažetak

Često se smatra da smanjenje radnog tjedna na četiri dana može smanjiti produktivnost. Međutim, istraživanja su pokazala da zaposlenici mogu održavati ili povećavati razine produktivnosti i u alternativnim radnim okruženjima, što dovodi u pitanje tradicionalni odnos između radnih sati i radne uspješnosti. Rezultati raznih istraživanja otkrili su kako implementacija četverodnevnog radnog tjedna može rezultirati povećanjem zadovoljstva poslom, većim moralom, povećanom produktivnošću te smanjenim promjenama posla i izostanaka s posla. Osim toga, može dovesti i do intenzifikacije rada i uzrokovati stres zaposlenicima, što vodi do sagorijevanja na poslu. Ipak, istraživanja pokazuju da fleksibilnost na radnom mjestu dovodi do smanjenja rizika od sagorijevanja. U radu se raspravlja o teorijskim temeljima implikacija fleksibilnog radnog okruženja te o tome kako vrsta industrije, organizacijska kultura i stilovi vođenja igraju ulogu u određivanju učinkovitosti radne fleksibilnosti. Rad naglašava važnost stalnog istraživanja i proučavanja medijatora za provođenje uspješne implementacije fleksibilnih radnih politika, prepoznajući dinamičnu međuigru između organizacijskih čimbenika i dobrobiti zaposlenika.

Ključne riječi: četverodnevni radni tjedan, fleksibilno radno vrijeme, intenzifikacija posla, produktivnost