IN ENGLISH

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THE FOUR-DAY WORKWEEK: ASSESSING INDIVIDUAL READINESS

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Abstract in English

The length of the working week has historically undergone significant changes. In the 19th century, a typical workweek comprised of six days, each lasting ten-hour. By the mid-20th century, this was reduced to eight-hour days (Cross, 1989; Hunnicutt, 1988). The 5/40 model, entailing five workdays of eight hours each, gradually became the standard, introduced by Henry Ford in 1926 (Hunnicutt, 1984). This model was designed to address worker fatigue and accidents, which were believed to reduce productivity and increase workplace accidents. In the 1930s, the five-day workweek was further examined in the UK, much like current evaluations of the four-day workweek (Veal, 2022).

Interest in the four-day workweek surged between 2008 and 2012 and has seen a resurgence since around 2019 (Campbell, 2023). Today, there is a growing societal concern for mental health and an increased focus on balancing personal and professional life. Supporters of the four-day workweek highlight benefits such as increased productivity, health improvements, better work-life balance, greater engagement, and improved well-being (Jacob, 2020; Pang, 2020; Chakraborty et al., 2022; Cuello, 2023). The advent of AI tools like ChatGPT has intensified the belief that reducing working hours is feasible, underscoring the need for further research into flexible work alternatives (Jahal et al., 2023).

In recent years, the need to rethink how weekly working hours are structured has grown due to evolving societal objectives and increasing interest in alternative work models. This research seeks to understand what motivates acceptance of the four-day workweek model among individuals. Jahal et al. (2023) emphasize that acceptance of this model varies, suggesting a need for organizations and employees to be well-prepared for such transitions. This study aims to explore the factors influencing readiness for a four-day workweek, distinguishing between employees with managerial responsibilities and those without, while also examining the role of age in this readiness. We employed a quantitative approach, distributing questionnaires through social media and personal networks, focusing on five key indicators: productivity, health, well-being, work-life balance, and engagement. Additionally, we investigated how openness to experience might affect these relationships.

With 400 valid responses, we utilized structural equation modeling via SmartPLS to analyze the data. The results reveal that expectations of maintaining or increasing productivity, obtaining health benefits, and improving work-life balance are positively associated with readiness for a four-day workweek. However, no significant link was found between expectations of improvement in well-being or work engagement and this readiness. Furthermore, openness to experience did not appear to influence these relationships. Notably, managers and older employees showed less readiness for this transition.

The findings of this study clarify individuals' expectations regarding the four-day workweek and provide insights into how organizations can develop effective strategies for implementing such changes in a way that aligns with employee expectations. By understanding the barriers and drivers of acceptance, organizations can better prepare for a potential transition to a four-day workweek, ensuring alignment with both organizational goals and employee needs. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on workweek models and provides a foundation for future studies aimed at optimizing work arrangements in response to changing societal demands.

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Key-words: Four-day workweek; work-life balance; well-being; engagement; health; productivity; readiness for change.

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