

Research Article

Literature Review on the 4 Days Work Week (4DWW) System to Improve Worker Productivity and Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the 4-Days a Week (4DWW) system, an innovative work approach that aims to improve employee productivity and well-being. By reviewing the literature on the implementation of 4DWW in different countries and industries, the study identifies the benefits, challenges, and implications of transitioning to this model, particularly in the post-pandemic context. The study used a qualitative literature review, analyzing academic articles and case studies from SCOPUS-indexed journals. This research ranges from the early implementation of 4DWW in the 1970s to recent studies conducted after the COVID-19 pandemic. This research focuses on the impact of 4DWW on employee productivity and well-being. The 4DWW system significantly improves work-life balance and reduces employee stress, leading to better mental health and higher satisfaction. Productivity often increases due to shorter and more focused work periods. However, the challenges include managing work intensity and ensuring operational continuity, particularly in sectors that require a high physical presence. The study offers a comprehensive review of global research on 4DWW, which presents a holistic perspective on its potential benefits and drawbacks. The new thing lies in efforts to overcome the resurgence of interest in 4DWW post-pandemic and evaluate its feasibility in the modern work environment. The findings show that 4DWW can redefine the work paradigm, emphasizing quality over quantity while fostering a healthier and more sustainable work culture. The study underscores the need for legislative support, effective communication strategies, and tailored implementation plans to ensure a successful transition across a wide range of industries.

Keywords: 4 Days Work Week (4DWW); Productivity; Employee Well-Being; Work-Life Balance; Post-Pandemic; Implementation; Literature Review

1. INTRODUCTION

The Four Days Work Week (4DWW) system is a system that works in 1 week for only 4 working days. (Jahal et al., 2024a), this is an innovative approach that aims to increase productivity (Adams et al., 2021; Lesné & Heyer, 2024) and improving employee well-being (Pedersen, 2022). Research on the 4DWW System began in 1970 in the United States, to explore the feasibility and implications of the transition from a traditional five-day workweek to a four-day workweek, but not many have responded to it and used it. Over time, several developed countries, namely France, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, have used this Concept, this 4DWW system is carried out to regulate working hours. According to Dunham and Hawk, 1977 reduced condensed working hours, where employees typically work a week of more than 4 working days to a week of 4 working days (Jahal et al., 2024b). The reduction in working hours with the 4DWW system employees work 4 working days a week, and receive lower wages (Eberle, 1996).

The 4DWW system is thought to significantly reduce energy costs by minimizing operational days for the facility, leading to lower consumption and operating costs (Pringle & Bender, 2010). For example, institutions such as Brevard Community College reported energy cost savings of \$474,000 after implementing a four-day workweek (Pringle & Bender, 2010). With this 4DWW system, companies can create a more flexible and balanced work environment between professional and personal life, so employees have more time to rest, gather with family, or pursue their hobbies. The 4DWW model allows employees to have additional days off, which significantly reduces fatigue and stress, leading to better mental health (Naura Fathya et al., 2024) This can be said to be a reflection of the evolution of the way we look at work, from simply achieving economic targets to a more distant balance between work and personal life. Employees report higher job satisfaction and motivation, as they can allocate more time to personal commitments and self-care. The 4DWW initiative aligns with the needs of

employees, fostering a supportive work culture that values health (Naura Fathya et al., 2024). While the 4DWW system brings many advantages, it also raises concerns regarding service delivery and operational continuity, which requires careful consideration and planning for successful implementation.

In Europe, in recent years, the interest in reducing working hours (Reduce Work Hour / RWH) has increased, especially among politicians, media, trade unions and political parties (Srnicek, 2018). The reason for this movement is that in Europe it is necessary that countries in Europe must guarantee the right of workers to work with a time limit. Many articles have tested this Reduce Work Hour around the world such as Microsoft Japan (Paulus, 2019), and Vodafone New Zealand (Keall, 2020). In addition, trials in Iceland showed that workers began to reject long hours and value non-work activities more, suggesting the potential for an overall increase in productivity (Chung, 2022). The supporters of Reduce Work Hour propose various advantages or advantages of this Concept, namely regarding the benefits of the economy, the environment, society, family and individuals. The Pros and Cons of this Concept are still ongoing to this day.

The transition to 4DWW poses challenges, especially in maintaining service levels and managing employee schedules effectively ((Hung, 1994; Pringle & Bender, 2010). The transition to 4DWW often requires employees to engage in more frequent and effective communication to coordinate tasks in a compressed time frame (Minssen, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to optimize labor scheduling to meet demand while minimizing labor size, ensuring operational efficiency (Alfares, 2000; Hung, 1994). Some organizations may face challenges in implementation, such as potential disruptions in communication and collaboration between teams, which can affect overall productivity if not managed effectively (Shafique & Haddi, 2022). Organizations must invest in technologies that facilitate real-time communication and collaboration to address these challenges (Adams et al., 2021). Seeing the above, the author conducted a study of existing articles and discussed the 4DWW System, the influence of the implementation of this 4DWW system and the impact of the implementation of this 4DWW System. With this research, it is hoped that we can further uncover the 4DWW System which has an impact on increasing Productivity and Worker Welfare.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review approach to examine how a 4-day workweek (4DWW) work schedule can improve employee productivity and welfare. The literature search was carried out by reviewing scientific articles from various countries that discuss work-related issues, especially those related to the implementation of the 4DWW system. The system has been in use since the 1970s, with several studies investigating its effectiveness and dampening. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, interest in the 4DWW system has rebounded, which has prompted new research focusing on its relevance and application in today's workplace. The literature covered includes perspectives on productivity, work-related stress, employee well-being, and implementation challenges. This research was carried out in three stages. The first step is theoretical research to understand the effects and damping of the 4DWW system on work based on scientific articles in the journal SCOPUS. The second step is an impact analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

This section presents the findings of several studies on the implementation of the eight-day-a-week (4DWW) system that has been carried out in various countries. The main objective of this analysis was to identify the impact of the 4DWW system on productivity, work-related stress, and other related factors, such as employee retention and work-related stress. The analysis of this study uses qualitative methods, literature, and scope review, which illustrates the shortcomings of the system in building work flexibility and time efficiency. Some studies have also highlighted the potential for increased stress as a result of a crowded work environment. The following is a table of the results of the article analysis:

Table 1. Article analysis

Researchers	Heading	Method	Variable	Result
Tesha Jahal DK, 2024	Could the 4 Day Week Work ? A Scooping Review	Scooping Review	4DWW Productivity Employee Acceptance WorkBalanceCareer Path	Increase productivity Work flexibility becomes attractive and influential in the recruitment of workers Improve the balance of work in the Company with the environment as well as personal interests Impact on career advancement, especially for female workers.
David A, Spencer, 2022	A Four -Day Working Week. Its Role in Politics of Work	Qualitative	4DWW Productivity Employee well-being	The 4DWW system can be accepted by businessmen can really increase productivity RHW systems have an impact on efficiency and benefit the economy, social, and the environment The implementation of the 4DWW system needs to be considered for low-salary employees.
Julia Topps, Jan Hendrik Hile dkk 2021	How a – 4 Days Work Week affects Agile Software Development Team	Qualitative	4DWW Job SatisfactionEmployee Well-Being ProductivityAgile Effect	Increases worker satisfaction, but also found to be a level of worker stress Improving employee well-being Increase worker productivity Agile implementation was successful and Positive impact
Fetemah S Afshari, Letcia Guajardo dkk 2023	Compressed 4-Day Work Week for Dental Faculty Retention and Recruitment	Qualitative	4DWW Retention Employee Acceptance	Increase worker productivity Increase worker satisfaction, thereby contributing to good Worker Retention Flexibility to work is good so that it attracts attention in the context of employee recruitment
Mullens F & Glorieux, 2024	Reducing Working Hours : Shorter Days or Fewer Days per Week ? Insights form a 30 hour work week experiment	Qualitative	Reduced Working Hours Employee Welfare	Increase Productivity Improve employee well-being
Dr. Jee Jung Chung 2022	A Social Policy Case for a Four Day Week	Literature Review	4DWW Employee Welfare Productivity Environmental Impact	1 4-day work week can improve the welfare of workers. Reduced working hours can increase productivity The Importance of the State Making This Policy
Helen Delanery, Catherine Casey 2021	The Promise of A Four Day Week ? A Critical Apparaosal of a Management Led Initiative	Qualitative	4DWW ProductivityWorker Welfare	Increase productivity Improve employee well-being

Based on the results shown in the table, the 4DWW system can provide significant benefits, such as increased employee productivity, operational efficiency, and a positive impact on work and personal life or improved employee well-being.

3.2. Discussion

Rapid social, economic, and technological changes, especially post-Covid-19 pandemic, have opened up opportunities to reevaluate traditional work systems. One of the approaches that has attracted attention again is the concept of 4 Days Work Week (4DWW) (Chung, 2022; Delaney & Casey, 2022; Spencer, 2022). This work system offers a reduction in the number of working days in a week without reducing employee productivity. Several developed countries, such as the United Kingdom, Japan, and New Zealand, have tested and implemented this concept with mixed results. The goal is to create a better work-life balance, while also having a positive impact on the company and employees. However, the implementation of 4DWW is not free from challenges (Chung, 2022; Topp et al., 2021). Some are skeptical that this system can reduce productivity, especially in industrial sectors that require intensive physical presence. Additionally, the pressure to get the job done in a shorter amount of time can be stressful if not backed up with careful planning. Nonetheless, research in various countries shows that if implemented well, these systems not only increase productivity, but also create healthier work environments, improve employee well-being, and support social and environmental sustainability (Delaney & Casey, 2022; Topp et al., 2021). This system offers a new approach to managing working time, in the hope of increasing productivity and employee well-being. In this discussion, we will explore in depth how 4DWW can affect the world of work, both in terms of benefits and implementation challenges.

4 Days Work Week (4DWW) System to Increase Productivity

The concept of a four-day work week (4DWW) has become a topic of interest in global discussions about improving work productivity. Several studies have shown that 4DWW can improve employee productivity and well-being, especially when these initiatives are designed by involving workers in determining measures of success and productivity (e.g., shorter working hours accompanied by efficiency efforts) (Afshari et al., 2023; Delaney & Casey, 2022). Experiments in Iceland and Microsoft Japan reveal the potential for a productivity spike of up to 40% when workers are given more flexibility in managing work time. However, this success often depends on the support and resources available, including workload rearrangements and productivity measurements that align with organizational goals (Chung, 2022; Jahal et al., 2024a). From the results of the research conducted above, most employees are enthusiastic about this concept. Employees think that with today's technology, everything can be done faster and more precisely. Employees will focus on doing their work, so that the work can be completed quickly. Thus, employees can go home quickly and can do personal activities such as sports, worship, recreation, etc. The reason for this is that employees are enthusiastic about following this 4DWW system and are confident that productivity will increase. However, the impact of 4DWW is not always positive in all contexts. Several studies indicate that if work intensity is not managed properly, employees experience high stress and fatigue, which can ultimately reduce productivity (Afshari et al., 2023; Delaney & Casey, 2022; Topp et al., 2021). Research in Belgium, for example, highlights the importance of giving employees the option to adjust their reduced working hours, which can improve well-being without sacrificing work outcomes. In addition, skepticism has arisen regarding the long-term sustainability of the system, with some businesses returning to the traditional five-day workweek after the trial ends. Overall, the relationship between the reduction of workdays and productivity is complex. Studies have indicated mixed results, with some sectors (such as software development) showing stability or increased productivity despite reduced working hours, while others, such as manufacturing, have recorded minimal impacts. The literature concludes that the implementation of 4DWW should consider organizational characteristics, individual preferences, as well as job-specific needs to achieve a balance between employee productivity and well-being.

4 Days Work Week (4DWW) System to Improve Employee Well-Being

The welfare referred to here is mental balance. In a week, employees can work and rest well. Then the body becomes more comfortable and the mind will always be fresh. Comfort is really felt by the employees in the Company (Mullens & Glorieux, n.d.; Topp et al., 2021). This welfare is the dream of all employees and management. The 4DWW system, is one of the steps towards the Welfare of the Employees (Mullens & Glorieux, n.d.; Topp et al., 2021).

The four-day-a-week (4DWW) work system has attracted widespread attention as an innovative approach to improving employee well-being. Research shows that these policies provide significant benefits, including improved work-life balance, more time for family, and self-development opportunities. In addition, 4DWW has been shown to reduce stress and fatigue levels, thus creating a healthier and more supportive work environment. In the post-pandemic context, this approach is increasingly relevant as many workers want greater flexibility in managing their working hours (Jahal et al., 2024a). The 4DWW policy also contributes to the redefinition of work values and productivity. A decrease in the number of working days does not mean a decrease in yield; Instead, many studies show that productivity can remain stable or even increase. In Iceland, trials showed that workers began to appreciate non-work activities and rejected long tiring work hours (Spencer, 2022). This model not only challenges traditional work norms, but also promotes efficiency through better time management and clearer task priorities.

In addition to individual benefits, 4DWW also has a positive impact on social cohesion and sustainability (Chung, 2022; Spencer, 2022). By reducing travel time, the system contributes to a reduction in carbon footprint. Longer collective leisure time also encourages recreational activities and social interaction, which improves the overall quality of life of the community. However, the implementation of this policy requires strong legislative support as well as an adjustment of the work culture to ensure its success. Nonetheless, there are challenges that need to be overcome, such as the potential for increased stress due to the pressure of completing work in a shorter amount of time. Therefore, careful planning and effective communication are essential to support this transition. With the right approach, the 4DWW system can be a holistic solution to improve employee well-being, productivity, and work-life balance in the modern era.

CONCLUSION

The 4 Days Work Week (4DWW) system is an innovative approach that aims to adapt work patterns to modern social, economic, cultural, and technological needs. This concept has become increasingly relevant after the Covid-19 pandemic, especially due to significant changes in the way of working and the need for a life balance. Several studies show that 4DWW has the potential to improve employee productivity and well-being, with results varying depending on the sector and implementation context. **Increase Productivity:** The 4DWW system can drive work efficiency through better time management and focus on results rather than work duration. Experiments in some developed countries, such as Iceland and Japan, show that this system can increase productivity. However, that success depends on organizational support, workload resets, and flexible deployments. The main challenge is to ensure that the higher work intensity does not cause stress or fatigue. **Improving Employee Well-Being:** The 4DWW system positively impacts work-life balance, reduces stress levels, and improves mental health. With more time for family and self-development, employees feel more comfortable and motivated. In addition, this approach also supports sustainability by reducing travel time and carbon footprint. However, the pressure of completing work in less time can be an obstacle that needs to be managed effectively. Overall, the implementation of 4DWW requires careful planning, effective communication, and adjustment of work culture. With the right strategy, this system can be a holistic solution to improve productivity, well-being, and life balance in the modern era. However, its implementation must be tailored to the characteristics of the organization and the needs of the work to maximize benefits and minimize potential challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that the implementation of the 4 Days Work Week (4DWW) system be carried out in stages and adjusted to the characteristics of the organization, with management support, workload adjustments, and periodic evaluations to measure the impact on employee productivity and welfare. Further research can explore the effectiveness of 4DWW in different industry sectors and different work culture contexts.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors discussed the results and contributed to from the start to final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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