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**Student Name:** Bing Wang  
**Student ID:** 20119593  
**Programme:** Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management  
**Module:** Capstone Project (BAHBMD3)  
**Lecturer:** Robert MacDonald  
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**Student Number:** 20119593

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# Should all businesses adopt the 4-day workweek?

## Exploring the impact on employee well-being and productivity

### Abstract

This study aims to investigate the feasibility of shifting from a traditional 5-day workweek to a 4-day workweek in different operational contexts. This idea arose because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and accelerated by the rising of technology, the 4-day workweek as a potential alternative that challenges traditional work norms and makes organisations reconsider their work structures.

The study is based on 2 existing literatures, including a CIPD report on a 4-day workweek trial in the UK and a global study by Kelly et al (2022). The literature review suggested growing interest among employees and employers and the potential benefits of shorter working weeks, such as improve employee well-being, increase productivity and reduce turnover rates. The study also explores international examples, such as Belgium and the ICE Group in Ireland who already embraced the 4-day workweek. This study will use a mixed-methods approach by both qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the feasibility of a 4-day workweek and aim to explain the data results in more depth at the end of the research. Qualitative data was collected from 3 in-depth interviews to explore individual experiences, reactions, and attitudes towards a 4-day workweek. Quantitative data was collected via SurveyMonkey, a sample size of 25 individuals from different backgrounds to discuss participants' expectations and perceptions of the 4-day workweek.

- **Purpose:** explores the feasibility and potential impact of adopting a 4-day workweek on employee well-being, job satisfaction, and overall productivity.
- **Design/methodology/approach:** The research uses a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative data from an online survey gathered 25 responses, together with qualitative data from 3 semi-structured interviews to provide a detailed understanding of a 4-day workweek.
- **Findings:** The study found a strong preference for a 4-day workweek from survey respondents, with 88% expressing interest and 76% believing it would significantly improve their work-life balance. However, there is significant resistance of 56% of responses very unlikely to adapt to a 4-day workweek due to additional cost, staffing,

administrative complexities, and maintaining productivity, qualitative data supported these findings.

- **Research limitations:** The small sample size may not fully represent the diverse perspectives on this topic, and the reliance on self-reported assessments which may result in bias. Future research should involve larger, more diverse samples and consider comparative groups to better understand the implications of a 4-day workweek.
- **Keywords:** 4-day workweek, work-life balance, well-being, job satisfaction, productivity.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The idea of a 4-day workweek has gained increasing interests in recent years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced many companies to shift from office-based work to remote work, this shift led to numerous discussions about the concept of the 4-day workweek, it has also made organisations to reconsider their traditional views of the standard 5-days' workweek.

Historically, the 5-day workweek was established and often linked to the Industrial Revolution and labour movements in the 19th century. During that time, labour unions, worker strikes, and legislative actions played important roles in the success of reduced working hours and improved working conditions (Whaples, R.1990). In the early days of the Industrial Revolution, the working conditions in many factories were poor, and the average working hours was around 16 hours (Stronge, W. and Harper, A. 2019), most workers worked all day and returned home exhausted, with little to no energy left for leisure activities or family time. They lived a day of going to work with their eyes open and not being allowed to rest until going to bed. The long working hours and harsh working conditions made workers began to fight for their rights, they smashed machines and went on strike, however, the workers at that time did not have an idea of how many hours they should work in a day. In the early 19th century, Robert Owen a factory owner and philanthropist proposed to improve welfare, well-being and balance work and rest time, he put forward the slogan *"Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will,"* (Whaples, R, 1990. pp.393). Robert Owen's social experiment failed because working only 8 hours a day was still considered a luxury at that time, however, his proposal awakened many workers to

pursue an 8-hour workday. Since then, labour strikes and trade unions actions begun to fight for their rights and the 8-hour workday has become a national and international trend.

In 1919, the International Labor Organisation passed the Working Hours Convention, which regulated that the maximum working hours per week could only be 48 hours because the work week was 6 days at that time, which was equivalent to 8 hours per day. (Rasmussen, M.B. 2018) since then, reducing working hours and raising wages has gradually become a social consensus. According to Stronge, W. and Harper, A. (2019) In 1926, Ford factory created and implemented worker welfare by invented "Fordism," aim to promote workers work with dignity, and back home with dignity and afford the cars they build themselves. He considered his factory as a "model society" and allowed workers to work 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week in his automotive production line. Since then, other factories have followed the 8-hour workday in order to attract more high-skilled labour. By the time of mid-20th, many industrialised and developed economies had adopted the 8-hour workday or the 40-hour workweek and implemented the laws for this purpose.

So, why 8 hours? In the past, the production line is constant, the output is equal to the hours they worked; therefore, the workers got paid for the hours they worked. But now the output of many works cannot be measured in terms of working hours due to the technology.

According to Our World in Data (2020) Norway and Switzerland have fewer annual working hours per worker, but much higher labour productivity in 2019 (100.3\$/h and 82.9\$/h); Cambodia and Bangladesh worked much longer hours but have less productivity (3.4\$/h and 4.8\$/h) (see the data provided below) The data provided clear evidence that working fewer hours does not necessarily decrease productivity, thanks to the advanced technology, there is no essential difference between staying at your desk for 8 hours, or 10 hours, additionally the automation on the production line has also freed workers' hands. In fact, extended work hours might lead to burnout and exhaustion, which might decrease productivity. A growing body of research, such as Kelly et al (2022) indicates that reducing the current 8-hour workday or 5 days a week can have a positive impact on employee well-being, job satisfaction, and improve employee's physical and mental health, and job efficiency.

## Annual working hours vs. labor productivity, 2019

Labor productivity is measured as GDP per hour of work. GDP is adjusted for inflation and for differences in the cost of living between countries.



Table Chart

Country or region ↑↓	↑↓ Annual working hours per worker hours per worker • 2019	↑ Productivity international-\$ in 2017 prices per hour • 2019
Norway	1,384	100.3 \$/h
Switzerland	1,557	82.9 \$/h
Luxembourg	1,506	80.3 \$/h
Denmark	1,381	76.0 \$/h
United States	1,765	73.7 \$/h
Netherlands	1,440	69.8 \$/h
Germany	1,386	68.9 \$/h

Data source: Feenstra et al. (2015), Penn World Table (2021) - [Learn more about this data](#)  
OurWorldInData.org/working-hours | CC BY



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## Annual working hours vs. labor productivity, 2019

Labor productivity is measured as GDP per hour of work. GDP is adjusted for inflation and for differences in the cost of living between countries.



Table Chart

Country or region ↑↓	↑↓ Annual working hours per worker hours per worker • 2019	↑ Productivity international-\$ in 2017 prices per hour • 2019
Pakistan	1,967	8.8 \$/h
India	2,123	8.7 \$/h
Vietnam	2,132	6.7 \$/h
Myanmar	2,447	5.1 \$/h
Bangladesh	2,419	4.8 \$/h
Cambodia	2,475	3.4 \$/h
Jamaica		

Data source: Feenstra et al. (2015), Penn World Table (2021) - [Learn more about this data](#)  
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The 8-hour a day and 5 days a week work arrangement is slowly facing challenges due to the advanced technologies and growing concern about work-life balance, mental health, and happiness. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed this concept even further, especially when a large number of people working from home that gained significant attention to remote work, and flexible work arrangements, this shift has led to numerous discussions about the possibility not only remote work but also to a 4-day workweek, what employer can do to improve employee's well-being, productivity, and whether the 4-day workweek can become the new norms of the modern workplace.

In 2019, Microsoft Japan started a trail of 4-day workweek, resulting in a 40% increase in productivity; in March 2021, Spain began a 4-day workweek trail nationwide; in 2022, UK

started a 4-day workweek pilot program and reported that nearly half of the respondents experienced an improved productivity, and 86% expressed a highly likely to continue with a 4-day workweek after the trial. Iceland has also announced the world's largest and longest 4-day workweek experiment, which started from 2015 to 2019, and involved 2,500 employees, including office workers from 9 to 5, and hospital employees who working on the shifts. The experiment results were positive, that all participants were healthier, happier, and more productive (Joly, J., Hurst, L. Walsh, D. 2023).

According to a report by Euronews, Belgium has become the first country in Europe to legislate a 4-day workweek in February 2022, the Belgium government's new labour agreement stated that private sector employees now have the right to apply for a 4-day workweek. However, the 4-day workweek does not reduce the total weekly working hours, for example, if an employee works 38-hour a week, a 4-day workweek means 9.5 hours per day. This is similar to the right to work remotely in Ireland, which means it is up to the employer to agree to the request, if the employer refuses the request, they must give valid reasons within one month (The Brussels Times 2024). The ICE Group, an Irish-based company became the first in Ireland to embrace the 4-day workweek in July 2019, the director of recruitment at ICE Group, Margaret Cox stated: *"We built our model around a three-day weekend, the idea is everybody works four days and has a three-day weekend. Either Monday to Thursday, or Tuesday to Friday, and then you're off Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or Saturday, Sunday, Monday."* She even wrote a book called 'The 3-Day Weekend' to describe the experiences in introducing a 4-day workweek (Breaking News 2023). With the rise of technology, the idea of flexible work arrangements, and a growing interest in enhancing employee well-being and job satisfaction, many organisations are starting to reconsider the traditional 5-day workweek, will the 4-day workweek become the new norm as the 5-day workweek did in the last century? Perhaps, with the success of remote work, a 4-day workday may not be out of reach, and the 5-day work arrangement may become history in the future.

While the evidence above supporting a 4-day workweek seems strong, there are still some challenges to consider before widespread adoption. When deciding whether this is the best option, I conduct the research aims to provide empirical evidence to support the findings and feasibility of the 4-day (32-hour) workweek, by analysing the companies that have already made this transition and identifying the key factors that contribute to their success and the challenges they faced. This study is based on the 100-80-100 model, which means employees work 80% of their regular time, get 100% pay and deliver 100% of their output, in other

words, employees work 4 days (32-hour) and get paid for 5-days without increase in total daily working hours. In this study, I will investigate how the 4-day (32-hour) workweek affects employee well-being and productivity and hope to generate insights that can guide business and policymaking in the ongoing discussion of the 4-day workweek in Ireland. This study is based on the CIPD report (2022) *'The four-day week: Employer perspectives on moving to a shorter working week'*, the report provides insights into the recent trial of a 4-day workweek in the UK and explores the attitudes and practices of employers perspectives regarding reduced working hours without loss of pay; and *The Four Day Week: Assessing global trials of reduced work time with no reduction in pay: Evidence from Ireland* (Kelly et al. 2022) that highlights the potential benefits of reduced work hours on various benefits of work-life balance, well-being, and productivity; and research on work-life balance by Morganson, V.J., Litano, M.L. and O'Neill, S.K. (2014) *'Promoting work-family balance through positive psychology'* the authors suggests that managers can foster work family enrichment by provides resources, support, and flexibility to their employees and the way of alternative work arrangements. This research builds upon the report and their insights and aims to conduct the ongoing discussion of the changing nature of future work in Irish industries. (I'll use the term "4-day workweek" thereafter)

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

As we mentioned before, the growing interest of 4-day workweek concept led many organisations and individuals to start rethinking the changing work patterns from the traditional 5-day workweek to the 4-day workweek. In this chapter, we will discuss the critical overview of existing literature on the 4-day workweek, focusing on two key studies: the CIPD report on employer's perspectives and Kelly et al. (2022) study of the global trial of a 4-day workweek, as well as the theoretical and methodological approaches used by the different authors, and aim to conduct a critical examination of the following sources, including exploring their findings, research methods, and implications for the ongoing discussion of the 4-day workweek arrangements. This literature review is divided into five parts, the first part introduces the CIPD report and Kelly et al's 4 Day Week Global (4DWG) trials; the second part is the current study of 4-day workweek and the research methods they used in the literature, and analysis their experiment of 4-day workweek; the third part find the key issues in each research, and the gaps in the literature review; the fourth part is conclusion

and potential role in reshaping the future work; at the end of this chapter is research questions aims to provide a clear focus and direction for the study.

## **2.2 Current study of the 4-day workweek**

The CIPD conducted a 4-day workweek trial in June 2022 in the UK, involving 70 companies and over 3,300 employees, across various industries, including financial firms, telecoms, and a brewery, the report is based on a survey of 2,000 senior HR practitioners, provides a comprehensive view of employer's perspectives on the 4-day workweek. It shows that there is growing interest and awareness among employers about the potential benefits of reduced working hours, such as improved employee well-being, engagement, productivity, and retention. However, it also acknowledged that there are significant barriers and challenges to implementing a 4-day workweek, such as cost and legal constraints, customer expectations, and employee preferences. The report suggests that a 4-day workweek may not be suitable for all businesses and industries, and employers need to consider various factors, such as the nature of work, the size of the organisation, the sector, and the culture before making any changes to their work schedules. The report also recommends that employers need to consult with their employees and stakeholders, conduct pilot projects, and evaluate the outcomes before adopting a 4-day workweek.

Kelly et al. (2022) '4 Day Week Global' trials provide empirical evidence that aims to test the feasibility and impact of a 4-day workweek in different sectors and countries. The samples were collected in 6-month periods, where employees work 80% of their regular hours receive 100% of their remuneration and deliver 100% of their output. The first trial started in February 2022, it involved 614 employees across different countries, including Ireland, Australia, the United States and New Zealand. The results show that a 4-day workweek can have positive outcomes for employees, such as increased job satisfaction, happiness, health, performance, creativity, and loyalty. It also shows that a 4-day workweek can reduce stress, burnout, absenteeism, turnover, and carbon emissions. However, it also acknowledged that a 4-day workweek may not be feasible or desirable for many organisations due to their circumstances and preferences. The study suggests that a 4-day workweek requires a high level of trust, open communication, flexibility, and support from both parties to ensure its success. The study also recommends that businesses and policymakers could collaborate to create an environment for a 4-day workweek, such as providing incentives, guidance, and legislation.

The Morganson et al (2014) article provides a theoretical perspective on work-family balance from a positive psychological way. The article is based on the theoretical concepts of work-family balance, such as work-family conflict, enrichment, integration, and segmentation. It also mentioned the empirical evidence on the antecedents and outcomes of work-family balance, such as individual characteristics, organisational factors, family factors, and well-being. Morganson et al (2014) suggest that managers and employees should foster work-family balance through positive psychology interventions, such as providing resources, support, and flexibility. This article does not directly address the 4-day workweek, but it discovered the importance of work-life balance, which is closely related to the well-being of the 4-day workweek.

Those studies provide deep insights into the implications and feasibility of a 4-day workweek. CIPD's report was more focused on employer's perspectives, illustrating the challenges, opportunities, and motivations associated with the transition to shorter working hours. Kelly et al.'s study offers a comprehensive analysis of global trials and focuses more on employees' perspectives regarding their experiences of a 4-day workweek. These studies have brought attention and led to a growing body of research on shorter working arrangements and its impact on employee well-being, productivity, and organisational performance.

### **2.3 The key issues and the gaps in the literature review**

The CIPD report uses a mixed methods approach to collect and analyse data, including the Labour Force Survey to understand the pattern of hours that employees currently work, and a survey of 1,000 employers across different sectors and sizes, the survey mainly focuses on 2,000 senior HR practitioners. Additionally, a series of interviews with 12 employers who have implemented or are considering to implementing a 4-day workweek. The report also acknowledges the limitations and gaps in its methodology, such as the interview data were collected from senior HR practitioners and managers to gather the potential impacts of implementing a 4-day workweek, these individuals hold senior positions in the organisation and have different perspectives on strategic decision making, therefore, their perspectives may not fully represent the majority of employees. In fact, there can be significant differences between the senior management and the employees, according to Kafui Agbozo, G., Hoedoafia, M. and Boateng Atakorah, Y. (2018) the different perspectives between employers and employees regarding the unwritten expectations and obligations. For example, employers often prioritize employees who are reliable and hardworking, while employees may

emphasise rewards, working environment, decision making and flexibility, or they may have different concerns about compressed work schedules that may impact their workload, job satisfaction, work-life balance or vice versa. That difference highlights the employees may have different expectations from those in the management position, therefore, their views may vary depending on responsibilities, shift patterns and personal circumstances. The following appendices support those different exceptions.

<b>Employee Expectation</b>	<b>Employer Expectation</b>
Jobs will be motivating, rewarding and satisfying	Reliable, diligence and trustworthiness
Safe and conducive working environment	Acceptance of organisational core values and visions
Fair rewards for efforts	Faithfulness and dedication to the job and the organisation
Involvement in work-related decision making	Demonstrate a concern for the reputation of the organisation
Opportunities for career and personal development	To conform to accepted standards of behaviour
Equal opportunity for all employees	Consideration for other employees and managers

Source: Dundon (2010:187)

The CIPD report mentioned that 60.5% of the respondents were satisfied with their working hours, but the report has not clearly stated the details about those 60.5% majority, such as their role, seniority level, gender etc, it is difficult to clarify whose views were represented in this statistic data. For example, if the majority of respondents who report satisfaction with their work hours were managers or individuals in senior positions, their views may be influenced by greater control over their schedule, higher levels of autonomy, and access to resources that enable them to manage their workload effectively. In contrast, frontline employees have less autonomy and greater work demands, and they may have different views on the work schedules. Therefore, this finding may not accurately reflect the broader employee populations.

In addition, the survey was conducted over a relatively short period of time, from the 17th of June to the 12th of July 2022, therefore, lack of longitudinal data to measure the long-term impact on employees and the organisation, this may limited the accuracy of the survey in drawing conclusions about the long-term impact of implementing a 4-day workweek, as employee's perceptions and experiences may change over time, and job demands generally fluctuated this may lead to different results in the long run. For example, employees may

initially experience benefits such as improved work-life balance or improved productivity, but it is unclear whether these effects persist or diminish over time.

The CIPD report may have a potential bias on its self-selection of the employers who participated in the survey and interviews that could potentially influence the reliability of the findings. For example, some employers may be more willing to participate than others, such as companies with more advanced technology, or companies that have already had success working from home during COVID-19, this may lead to positive findings. On the other hand, those who are involved with customer interaction, or in the service sectors may be sceptical or have different attitudes to a 4-day workweek, this self-selection bias may distort the results.

The author states that *'The key challenge to implementing shorter working hours is the need to boost productivity to pay for it.'* However, as I mentioned earlier long working hours may historically equate to higher productivity, but advanced technology has reshaped the traditional way of working, this assumption no longer holds true in today's economy, as creativity, innovation and collaboration play an important role in today's organisational success. On the other hand, if the employee works long hours to complete tasks, he may experience diminishing returns in productivity and performance due to fatigue, stress, or sickness absence. Additionally, many other factors may affect productivity, such as pay, technology, work environment etc. According to Mudditt, B.L. and J. (2022), people will be more proactive with shorter working hours, For example, a 2014 study by Stanford University showed that after working 50 hours a week, productivity will drop significantly, suggesting that 35 hours is the optimal working hours, and beyond this limit, productivity will begin to decline, while another suggested that people should only work 6 hours a day. Another study in Japan found that long working hours of key team members harm team productivity, while shorter hours cause the opposite effect (Owan, H., Shangguan, R. and DeVaro, J. 2021). Therefore, it is not necessarily true that longer working hours imply higher productivity.

In contrast, Kelly et al (2022) used a more comprehensive approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data that involved surveys, interviews, peer support, coaching, workshops and mentoring to assess the outcomes of their global trials. The administrative data was collected from the companies who participated in the research, and the survey data was collected from their employees. The surveys were conducted at 3 stages, before the trial, midway through the trial, and at the end of the trial, the information collected included well-being, family and personal life, and energy use etc. they provided evidence of *'long working hours are bad for*

*human health, with a recent WHO/ILO review finding associations with higher rates of heart disease and stroke'* and they provided case study from Nordic countries such as Swedish, Finnish, Iceland trials as examples to support their findings (Kelly et al. 2022). Their qualitative interviews with managers highlighted the positive impacts of the shorter workweek on recruitment, employee motivation, autonomy, and productivity; employees also shared their positive experiences during the interviews, such as the trial allowed them to spend more quality time with their family and engage in activities they like, and improved eating habits, increased exercise, better sleep, and enhanced mental health etc. However, the author acknowledged that only 23 employees from one organisation in the control group completed this survey, a low participation rate may hinder the reliability of comparisons between the trial and control groups, and many other organisations did not collect detailed performance or productivity data, the author suggests that future research should expand sample size, diversity, and the more complexity of the research design.

The overall finding was highly positive, especially on performance and productivity, several companies reported revenue increases and reduced sickness absence. However, it's difficult to know if there is another factor that may influence the outcome, for example, if the participants know that they have been observed (the potential observer effect), they may feel pressure to demonstrate increased productivity, or more engaging during the trial period to reach the positive outcome, known as the 'Hawthorne effect', which means individuals changing their behaviour or performance when they know they have been observed or knowing they were part of a study. This may lead to distortion of the finding, as participants may unconsciously alter their behaviour to align with perceived expectations or present a favourable performance (Nikolopoulou, K. 2022). Therefore, it's difficult to draw accurate conclusions about the data.

The report also lacks of consideration of the broader factors, which may influence the outcomes, such as organisational culture, management style, and technology. For example, if organisational cultures value work-life balance, and employee well-being and support flexible work arrangements are more likely to adopt a 4-day workweek; conversely, a rigid or hierarchical organisational culture may hinder the implementation of a 4-day workweek. Likewise, different management styles and leadership may view a 4-day workweek differently. For example, some managers encourage employees in decision-making, and they are willing to provide support and resources to facilitate a smooth transition to a 4-day workweek.

In addition, the author states that '*Employees' self-rated performance improved from an average score of 7.16 at baseline to 7.72 by the end of the trial*'. However, this finding is based on the self-selected sample, which may not be reliable enough to draw conclusions. On the other hand, the report did not provide clear definitions of performance or how it was measured, which may affect the validity of the results, therefore, further research may need to address those issues.

The overall finding of the 4-day workweek trial in Ireland has positive effects on employees' well-being, job satisfaction, and reduced burnout and work-related stress, however, the measurements of well-being, job satisfaction and mental/ physical health are more complex in reality, since each individual is different, this means that employees' perceptions and experiences of well-being, job satisfaction, burnout, and work-related stress can vary.

Furthermore, the simple result may not be accurate depending on personal preference, job role, and work environment. For example, some employees may feel that an extra day off will result in less stress and increased job satisfaction, while others may feel more stressed by completing the 100% outcome in less time. In addition, other factors such as organisational culture, or interpersonal relationships may also affect overall well-being and job satisfaction, which was not reflected in the report, in addition, the Irish trial was collected during 6 month period, this captured short-term improvements, however, the long-term sustainability of these effects is unclear, a longitudinal study to assess the long-term effects of implementing a 4-day workweek may be needed.

Kelly et al (2022) study is mainly focused on the employee's perspective, this may ignore the other stakeholder's interests, such as employers, managers, and customers, this may result in an incomplete understanding of the potential benefits, challenges, and trade-offs when implementing a 4-day workweek. As I mentioned earlier, employees may have different interests or preferences that influence their perceptions and responses to the study, they may ignore the potential trade-offs or challenges of adopting a 4-day workweek. For example, employees report higher levels of job satisfaction or well-being due to shorter workweek schedule, but this may involve a trade-off between customer satisfaction and quality of work, which may affect the profitability or competitiveness of the organisation; the other stakeholders may also need take into account, such as customers, suppliers, or society at large, because those group of people may have different expectations or demands regarding the availability of the service. Therefore, without consideration of multiple stakeholder's interests, the findings may be incomplete, or have potential bias of the feasibility of the 4-day workweek.

## 2.4 Conclusion

Those authors took a multifaceted approach to the 4-day workweek concept, those sources have some similarities in their topic, such as they both use the 100-80-100 model, which means employees work 80% of their regular time, receiving 100% of their pay, and delivering 100% of their productivities. In other words, employees work a 4-day (32-hour) per week and get paid for 5 days, without increasing the total daily working hours.

They all provide positive benefits of reduced working hours to improve employee well-being, satisfaction and productivity. They all used a mixed methods approach to collect and analyse data, such as surveys, interviews, case studies, and focus groups. Those authors recognise that the 4-day workweek concept challenges traditional work norms and has the potential to reshape the future of work. However, those research papers also differ from each other, the CIPD report is mainly focused on the UK context and the senior HR professional/ employer's perspective on a 4-day workweek, its emphasis the potential benefits such as improved employee well-being and productivity, but also address the challenge of implementing a 4-day workweek, such as cost, legal constraints, and customer expectations. This report lacks consideration of broader factors that may influence the outcome, such as overly reliance on data from senior HR practitioners and managers, self-selection of the employers and data collected during a short period of time, which may lead to potential biases in the findings. On the other hand, Kelly et al.'s study provides empirical evidence from global trials of the 4-day workweek, showing positive outcomes for employees in terms of well-being, job satisfaction, and reduced stress. However, the study mainly focused on the employee's perspective, which raises questions about the limitation of the findings across different stakeholders' interests, and measurements of well-being, job satisfaction and mental/ physical health, this may hinder the reliability and feasibility of implementing of 4-day workweek; on the other hand, the self-selected sample may not be reliable enough to draw conclusions. The study acknowledges challenges such as low participation rates in control groups and the lack of detailed performance data, highlighting the need for further research to address these limitations.

Morganson et al (2014) article is more general and theoretical covering various aspects of work-life balance. The CIPD report and the Kelly et al. study is more empirical and practical therefore, in this research, I will mainly focus on the CIPD report and the Kelly et al (2022) study to discover whether the 4-day workweek is feasible for all organisations and how 4-day workweek will impact employee's well-being and productivity. To answer those questions,

the CIPD report suggests that a 4-day workweek may not be feasible or suitable for all businesses and industries due to various factors such as cost, legal constraints, customer expectations, and employee preferences. Kelly, O., Schor, J., Fan, W argues that a 4-day workweek can be feasible and beneficial for most businesses and industries if there is a high level of trust, communication, flexibility, and support from both parties. This research aims to use those resources as the foundation and consider the perspectives of both employers and employees, conducting a more comprehensive and comparative study of the 4-day workweek across different industries and company sizes in Ireland. Also discover the potential impact of reduced working hours on employee's well-being, productivity, and the broader work environment. Hopefully, at the end of the research, I will be able to provide evidence-based recommendations for businesses and policymakers who are interested in adopting or supporting a 4-day workweek.

## **2.5 Research Questions**

The primary objective of this study is to find out whether a 4-day workweek can be universally applicable across different organisations and industries. It seeks to identify what makes a 4-day workweek viable, is the job roles, operational requirements, or the trust? Additionally, the question aims to discover the implications of this transition on various stakeholders. For example, the impact on job satisfaction, well-being, and personal time on employees; and how it might affect the business in terms of operational costs, productivity, and competitive advantage. It may also consider the broader societal and economic effects, for example, the retail and hospitality sectors, how those changes may affect customers' behaviour, and the environmental impact of the firms operating only 4 days a week.

Ultimately, at the end of the study hope to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how a 4-day workweek can be implemented without increasing daily working hours and provide valuable insights that can guide organisations to make informed decisions about shorter work schedules. To answer this primary question, several sub-questions will be added to identify the potential benefits such as productivity, employee well-being, and work-life balance; and perceived challenges or concerns that the organisations may face during the transition, such as operational needs, industry specific, cost, trust etc, and hope to achieve the following objectives after the research:

1. Determine if a 4-day workweek can be adopted by a wide range of organisations without increasing weekly working hours.

2. Examine the impact of a 4-day workweek on employee well-being, job satisfaction, and overall productivity.
3. The effect of a 4-day workweek on employee productivity, or any potential improvements or drawbacks.
4. Explore resistance to the transition from a 5-day to a 4-day workweek and analyse the factors influencing this resistance.
5. Examine how organisations look at the feasibility of a 4-day workweek, consider operational requirements, employee expectations, and potential impacts on the business.
6. Offer evidence-based recommendations for businesses to consider the adoption of a 4-day workweek.

By addressing these issues, at the end of the study we can gain comprehensive knowledge on shorter work arrangements and provide businesses with valuable insights to make informed decisions about the 4-day workweek and its potential role in shaping the future of work.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Philosophical Assumptions**

Social constructivist theory assumes that our understanding of a 4-day workweek isn't a fixed reality, but rather shaped by social norms, historical trends, and individual experiences (Brau 2020). This perspective suggests that the traditional 5-day workweek is not an inherent truth about how our work should be structured but rather an evolution of social structures and conventions over time. According to the CIPD (2022) report the majority of people work 5 days a week, and from our online survey 84% of employees work full-time 5 days per week. However, this norm is being challenged when the new generation of employees, gig economics and remote work influencing shifts our societal values towards work-life balance, proponents argue that shorter workweek allow more time for family, leisure activities and self-care, and in the modern society our work should also give us some sense of purpose, where each individual have space to pursue their personal growth and fulfilment beyond just paid employment. The social constructivism theory helps us understand how these evolving societal values and norms influence the perceptions of a 4-day workweek and brings different expectations to the table, guides us to discover the different age groups and gender and other demographic factors, explore how these groups perceive the concept of a shorter workweek and what influences their attitudes towards it. For example, younger employees might

prioritise work-life balance and flexibility, while older employees might see their work as a core part of their identity and purpose. Understanding these different perspectives can provide insights into the broader societal and cultural shifts impacting the acceptance and implementation of a 4-day workweek.

This study follows the principles of empiricism, which means studying reality only through direct experience and sensory perception, this involves accumulating facts and data through observation and experimentation, often without necessarily consider broader implications or interpretations at first (Bell and Bryman, 2011, pp 10). This approach uses online surveys to collect quantitative data on participants' perspectives on a 4-day workweek, by gathering objective measurements of how different age groups and genders perceive their well-being and productivity in relation to a 4-day workweek, by doing this we can establish a foundation of empirical evidence. On the other hand, the interpretivism values the complexity of human experience and the subjective meaning individuals attached to their actions and experiences (Bell and Bryman, 2011, pp. 17, 10). This philosophical assumption acknowledges that human behaviour and attitudes cannot be fully understood through quantitative data, therefore, qualitative methods, such as interviews will be used to allow us to capture the subjective experiences and interpretations of individual participants, which allow us to move beyond quantitative measures of "what" individuals think about a 4-day workweek, to the 'why' behind their attitudes and potential concerns. Quantitative data from online surveys offers a broad overview of general trends and patterns, while qualitative data from interviews provides detailed insights into the personal and contextual factors that influence individual attitudes. By integrating both empirical and interpretivism approaches, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of feasibility of the 4-day workweek.

### **3.2 Ethical Considerations**

7 individuals were initially selected for interviews, with 3 agreed to participate, each participant was contacted by phone or email, the research objectives and data collection were informed before they decided to participate to ensure each of them fully understood the research purpose, their rights to withdraw and the written consent was obtained from each interviewee. Similar to the online survey, messages were sent through LinkedIn and Facebook with short messages like:

*'Thank you for participating in this survey as part of my final year college research on the feasibility and impact of a 4-day workweek. The idea is based on the 100-80-100 model, which means employees work 80% of their regular time, get 100% pay and deliver 100% of*

*their output, in other words, employees work 4-day (32-hour) and get paid for 5 days without an increase in total daily working hours.*

*Participation is voluntary based, and you can withdraw at any time. Your responses will be kept confidential, and all information will be anonymized.*

*By proceeding, you acknowledge that you understand the purpose of the study, your right to refuse to answer any questions, and your consent to participate....'*

The message fully explains the research's purpose, the survey is voluntary and anonymous, as a part of my final year university dissertation, this ethical consideration aims to protect participants' privacy, therefore, in the interview I use 'participate one,' 'participant two' and three to protect their identities in the report. A pilot study initiated by a close friend, this allowed me to calculate the duration of the interview, adjust interview question layouts, and identify and delete the repeated questions. Following a successful pilot interview, a formal interview was scheduled one week later, and adjustments were made based on initial feedback.

Online survey data is stored on the SurveyMonkey website and protected by a password; the online survey was deleted by the end of May 2024. Interview recordings were anonymously, transcribed, and retained by the researcher myself for 5 years as per the National College of Ireland's research policies, and will be deleted after 5 years. Participants were informed of their rights to access the research findings when the study is completed to ensure transparency and openness.

### **3.3 Limitations**

Low survey response rate as mentioned earlier with 25 completed the survey out of 281 invitations, the limited number of interview participants may not fully represent the finding, future research should aim for larger and more diverse sample sizes in both surveys and interview data collection. This could include professionals from various sectors such as human resources, business management, and specific industries like technology, healthcare, and hospitality. Additionally, future research could benefit from a comparative group design. For example, researchers could compare individuals and organisations that have already implemented a 4-day workweek, to a group that still works a traditional 5-day a week. Analysing both groups would provide a better understanding of what influences the success of a 4-day workweek and the potential challenges associated with its implementation. Furthermore, both surveys and interviews relied on self-reported data regarding productivity, well-being, and the perceived impact of a 4-day workweek. This may be perceived as biased,

as participants may answer the questions in a way, they perceive to be favourable, future research should address this issue by including a control group, as mentioned above. This would allow for a more accurate assessment of the true impact of a 4-day workweek on productivity, well-being, and other relevant factors.

## **Chapter 4: Research Design**

### **4.1 Research Methods**

A mixed methods approach will be used as mentioned above, the research started in September 2023 with two literature reviews: the CIPD report and Kelly et al (2022) study on the global trial of a 4-day workweek.

Quantitative data was collected by online survey through SurveyMonkey which commenced at the end of February 2024 and continued for one month. The survey aimed to collect extensive data on organisational readiness, perceived benefits, concerns, individual preferences and perceptions regarding the 4-day workweek. The participants can select the short, pre-established answer such as, likely, unlikely or improve, somewhat improve etc. This format allows for quick responses, easy quantify and statistical analysis of the data. This method is used as a complementary to interviews that may come up as ambiguity from open-ended responses. A total of 281 invitations were sent through LinkedIn and Facebook, however, only 25 responses completed online surveys across various sectors and industries. The survey questions included participants' demographics, current work schedules, the likelihood of shifting to a 4-day workweek, and its potential impact on productivity and well-being. The online survey was anonymous therefore the participants can answer the questions honestly and give accurate answers.

Due to the flexible nature, semi-structured interviews were used, and 6-9 open-ended interview questions were prepared to help an in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives on a 4-day workweek. Participants were informed through phone and email about the topics to be discussed, the questions were tailored based on each individual's responses and the way they answer the questions, this allows for a personalized dialogue. The participants were from different backgrounds, including Legal Executives, Senior business analyst, and Communication officer, the interview was conducted between the end of February and finalised at the beginning of April 2024, each interview lasted between 20-30 minutes. The interviews questions were related to participants' industry backgrounds, opinions on the transition of a 4-day workweek, potential challenges, and recommendations

for organisations considering this transition. Consent forms were signed by each interviewee and interviews were recorded with notes taken, the recording was transcribed into the word documents afterwards. Although initially planned as face-to-face, one interview was shifted to an online format by Team meeting due to the personal circumstances of the participant. The research is based on the 100-80-100 model, which was developed by Charlotte Lockhart and Andrew Barnes team leader of the '4 Day Week Global', which means employees work 80% of their regular schedule for 100% of their remuneration and maintain 100% productivity. By the combination of both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the responses to a 4-day workweek.

## **4.2 Sampling**

The sampling strategy is designed to capture a different perspective from each individual across various sectors and aims to understand how the 4-day workweek might be perceived across different industries. The target population for the survey was full-time and part-time employees across various industries due to their different concerns. For example, part-time employees might be concerned about pay, job security, and benefits rather than work-life balance, and well-being compared to full-time employees. The research used a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative data and using random sampling methods from an online SurveyMonkey questionnaire to ensure different representations. In the online survey, conducted between February and March 2024, there were 25 responses across various sectors and industries, there were 20% from Nonprofit, 12% from Finance & Financial Services, 8% each from Advertising & Marketing, Business Support & Logistics, Construction, Machinery and Homes, Telecommunications Technology, Utilities, Energy and Extraction, and 4% each from Airlines & Aerospace, Entertainment & Leisure, Government, and the unemployed demographic. Gender representation was fairly balanced, with 56% female and 44% male participants. The age distribution was varied, with 32% between 25-34, 28% between 35-44, 20% between 45-54, 16% between 18-24, and 4% aged 65 and above. The majority of 84% worked a traditional 5-day workweek, while the remaining 16% had alternative arrangements, such as 6 days or 4 days alternation, part-time, or 3 to 4 days a week. For the qualitative data, 7 individuals were initially selected for interviews based on their professional backgrounds, due to personal interests and scheduling constraints, 3 individuals agreed to participate. The interviews were scheduled based on the availability of the participants and were spread over a month, the interviews were primarily conducted on weekend afternoons, and the locations for the interviews varied, with 2 taking place at the

participants' homes, one at a café. The participants included one female from a Legal Executive background and two males, one from a Senior business analyst background and the other from a Communication Officer working in the Department of Justice. The quantitative data provided a broad overview of trends and patterns across different industries, while the qualitative interviews offered depth insight into individuals' experiences and attitudes towards a 4-day workweek.

## **Chapter 5: Finding**

The purpose of this study is to explore the feasibility of adopting a 4-day workweek and its perceived impact on employee well-being, job satisfaction, and overall productivity.

Quantitative data, collected from 25 respondents through an online survey, show a strong preference for a 4-day workweek, a significant of 88% of respondents expressed a desire for this alternative work arrangement, with 76% believing it would significantly improve their work-life balance and 84% perceiving it would enhance their overall well-being. However, some concerns were noted, with 44% of respondents fearing a negative impact on customer service, 20% worried about meeting deadlines, and 12% worried about the risk of burnout (see list of figures below).

Qualitative data from interviews supported these findings, all participants expressed a strong desire for perceived work-life balance and well-being. Participant One highlighted the potential for cost savings on childcare and increased time for family obligations; Participant Two repeated this sentiment, particularly for individuals with young children; Participant Three, already working a condensed schedule, emphasized its effectiveness in managing professional and personal commitments. Despite the benefits, the interviews also highlight the need for careful planning and consideration based on industry needs and costs associated with a shorter workweek.

### **5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis**

25 samples were collected through online SurveyMonkey between February and March 2024, frequency tables and percentages are used to summarise the sample demographics, including industry sector, gender, age, and current work schedule; and the attitudes towards a 4-day workweek, the perceived impact on work-life balance, job satisfaction, well-being, and potential challenges. 'n = 25' means the number of observations, the following table indicates that data from 25 individual being considered.

#### **Industry Sector (n = 25)**

Industry Sector	Frequency	Percentage
Nonprofit	5	20%
Finance & Financial Services	3	12%
Other	3	12%
Advertising & Marketing	2	8%
Business Support & Logistics	2	8%
Construction, Machinery, and Home	2	8%
Telecommunications Technology	2	8%
Utilities, Energy, and Extraction	2	8%
Airlines & Aerospace	1	4%
Entertainment & Leisure	1	4%
Government	1	4%
Unemployed	1	4%

#### Gender (n = 25)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	14	56%
Male	11	44%

#### Age (n = 25)

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
18-24	4	16%
25-34	8	32%
35-44	7	28%
45-54	5	20%
65+	1	4%

#### Current Work Schedule (n = 25)

The Current Work Schedule	Frequency	Percentage
5-day workweek	21	84%
Other	4	16%

#### Organisation Preferences & Readiness (n = 25)

Preference	Frequency	Percentage
Very unlikely	14	56%
Somewhat unlikely	6	24%
Neither likely nor unlikely	4	16%
very likely	1	4%

#### Preference for a 4-Day Workweek (n = 25)

Preference	Frequency	Percentage
Prefer a 4-day workweek	22	88%
Prefer the current standard workweek	1	4%
No preference stated	2	8%

#### Perceived Impact on Work-Life Balance (n = 25)

Perceived Impact on Work-Life Balance	Frequency	Percentage
Significantly improve	19	76%
Somewhat improve	5	20%
No change	1	4%

#### Perceived Impact on overall Well-being (n = 25)

Perceived Impact on Overall Well-being	Frequency	Percentage
Significantly improve	21	84%
Somewhat improve	3	12%
No change	1	4%

#### Expected Increase in Productivity (n = 25)

Expected Increase in Productivity	Frequency	Percentage
Somewhat increase	10	40%
Significantly increase	9	36%
No change	2	8%
Decrease	2	8%
Others	2	8%

#### Potential Challenges (n = 25)

Potential Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Impact on customer service	11	44%
Challenge in meeting deadlines	5	20%
Risk of burnout due to compressed workload	3	12%
No significant challenges identified	6	24%

## 5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews, the interviews has been transcribed and a thematic coding process is used to identify recurring themes and patterns to understand the participants' experiences and perspectives on the potential shift to a 4-day workweek. Participant One, a male aged between 44-54 working in the Department of Justice as a communication officer, his work more focuses on parole board operations, he shared his insights on the potential implementation of a 4-day workweek, especially if it would balance

his professional commitments with family obligations. He currently works 5-days a week with 7-hour shifts, he believes that a shift to a 4-day workweek could be beneficial if managed effectively.

*‘.... in terms of personal life, not just for me, but for a lot of people, it would be cost-effective..... and I will spend less on childcare, spend more time with family.....So, well-being would increase, and people would be healthier, happier, and more positive, from my own experience, having that extra day off would be fantastic!’*

However, he suggests that implementing a 4-day workweek would require careful consideration of business needs, such as staffing requirements and departmental coverage. He suggested a rotation schedule, where employees work 4 days but cover all 5 days on a rotating basis, he also acknowledges potential challenges related to recruitment costs and administrative complexities.

*‘I think when a business is implementing a 4-day workweek, they have to consider the business needs. I think it could be achieved in a way that doesn't affect the staff too much. Staff could be rotated across the five days, even though they only work 4 days. For example, I could work Monday to Thursday one week and Tuesday to Friday the next. I think it could work like that if the business has enough staff to cover all the days.’*

He also acknowledged challenges like increased staffing costs.

*‘I think whenever there are changes, there are always challenges. Challenges may come with recruitment, as companies may need to hire more staff, which would increase costs, other challenges may come with administration, like trying to roster staff and ensuring there have enough people available to cover various departments in the company.’*

Participant Two, a male age between 45-54 working at Blackhawk Network Europe as a Senior business analyst, also Local elections candidate for Dublin North area. He is currently working 5-days a week but has the option to work 2 days in the office with 3 days remote work, he is very interested in this concept, particularly from his desire to improve work-life balance.

*'I think for me definitely good idea, because I have a 4-year-old boy, it will be better for me to look after him and improve my work-life balance....'*

However, he believes that transition to a 4-day workweek requires careful planning and open discussions among employees to address potential challenges and ensure a smooth transition process, regular reviews are important to monitor productivity to reduce any negative impacts on the company.

*'I think I'm quite interested in how it will improve work-life balance, but the question is how to implement it. The company must be careful, ensuring productivity, especially with one fewer day each week. They also need to consider how to manage meetings, reviews, and projects. To successfully implement this, I think the organisation need a clear plan..... It should be discussed with the staff, and once they have made a plan, it should be implemented carefully, step by step....'*

Regarding employee and organisational responses to the change, the participant generally positive:

*'I think most employees will welcome the change, and you know, they definitely will improve their work-life balance for most of them, especially if they have a family, they have children'*

However, he acknowledges that some challenges may arise, such as trust, productivity and re-arrange the working schedule, also some employees may prefer the traditional 5-day workweek.

*'you need to rearrange all the work within 4 days.... and need to adjust their working arrangements ...and monitor the employees, make sure their productivity is still kept 100% or even more .....make sure all the working arrangements around the project are meet, and meetings had to be rearranged accordingly as well'.*

*'and maybe some still prefer to work 5 days and they are used to the 5-day schedule and they used to arrange all the work within 5 days a week, but I think the majority will welcome this change and embrace this new change and try to make sure the productivity is up on the level'.*

When considering the implementing a 4-day workweek across all industries, the participant acknowledges that some service-oriented industries may face greater challenges due to operational requirements. However, he suggests that adjustments can be made to accommodate reduced workdays while also ensuring essential services available.

*'it's depending on the industry and obviously some service industries cannot really apply that, you know like it's going to be hard for hospitals and the restaurant to open one less day, but you can work around' .... 'I think different industries have different needs and they have to look into their own perspective and make a plan accordingly...'*

Personally, the participant sees the extra day off as an opportunity to spend more time with his family and engage in leisure activities. He believes that the additional day would significantly contribute to his overall well-being and satisfaction with work-life balance. However, he acknowledges the challenges and still remains optimistic about the positive impact of this model on both individuals and organisations.

Participant three, female age between 30-40 working at Murray Flynn Solicitors as a Head of Litigation Team/ Legal Executive. She is currently working 3 to 4 days a week as part time due to family responsibility, from her point of view a 4-day workweek would balancing professional commitments with personal preferences for a condensed work schedule, however she remains sceptical:

*'I think it's a good idea, I'm very productive and efficient, so I could accomplish work within fewer days, but I think In general the amount of work in my office is so significant that we could not cope if all employees went to work 4 days a week unless we would employ more people..... It could be feasible then'*

However, she acknowledged that persuading employers to pay for 5 days for 4 days work maybe challenge, and the need to build trust among employees regarding the effectiveness of the new schedule.

*'I think. It might be difficult to persuade employers to pay for 5 days if people are working for 4 days. But in terms of work done, if employees are efficient and can do the same amount of work, it may be cost-effective due to reduced expenses like electricity'*

The participant believes that the impact on productivity depends on individual preferences, some employees may find motivation in the condensed workload, others may experience increased stress. She recommends open communication and collaboration between employers and employees to ensure a successful transition.

*'I'd recommend discussing the idea with employees, explaining the goals, and making sure everyone understands the potential benefits. If they can see that work can be done efficiently within fewer days, it could be beneficial for both parties.'*

Overall, the interviews suggest a cautious optimism regarding the 4-day workweek, some participants acknowledge implementation challenges, they see it as a positive step towards improved work-life balance and well-being, however, careful planning, open communication, and adjustments based on industry needs and individual preferences are seen as crucial for a successful transition.

#### The interviews with three participants (n=3)

Objective	Finding	Participant comments
<b>Work-Life Balance</b>	all participants expressed it would improve work-life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant 1: cost savings on childcare, more time for family.</li> <li>Participant 2: improved work-life balance for individuals with young children.</li> <li>Participant 3: already on condensed schedule, this allows her to effectively in managing professional and personal commitments.</li> </ul>
<b>Well-being</b>	potential improve to overall well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant 1: it could increase health and happiness due to better work-life balance.</li> <li>Participant 2: it could improve employee satisfaction.</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation Challenges</b>	all participants recognised challenges associated with implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant 1: careful planning to meet business needs, suggested rotation system for coverage.</li> <li>Participant 2: open communication with employees, regular monitoring of productivity.</li> <li>Participant 3: potential need for additional staff, building trust among employees regarding workload distribution.</li> </ul>
<b>Industry Considerations</b>	4-day workweek may not be universally applicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant 2: service industries with specific operational needs might face greater challenges, but adjustments can be made.</li> </ul>

<b>Employee Preferences</b>	some employees might prefer the traditional 5-day workweek.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant 2: some employees may prefer the traditional 5-day workweek.</li> <li>Participant 3: believe some employees may find motivation in the condensed workload, others may experience increased stress.</li> </ul>
<b>Productivity</b>	potential impact on productivity with different perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant 1: beneficial if managed effectively.</li> <li>Participant 2: careful planning, monitoring and adjustments needed to maintain productivity.</li> <li>Participant 3: Sceptical about maintaining current workloads without additional staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Considerations</b>	Mixed opinions, some concerns cost of additional staffing, departmental coverage, trust, and resistance from employer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant 1: concerns staffing and departmental coverage.</li> <li>Participant 2: building trust regarding employee effectiveness within the new schedule.</li> <li>Participant 3: potential challenges in persuading employers to maintain full pay for a reduced workweek.</li> </ul>

Through this study, we find that a 4-day workweek can be feasible for many organisations, but careful planning and adjustments are necessary, especially in hospitality, retail and service industries; the 4-day workweek could be a positive step towards improved work-life balance and well-being, however, the effect on productivity have mixed view may require further investigation; the findings also suggested the importance of considering operational needs, employee expectations, and potential business impacts when shifting to a 4-day workweek.

## Chapter 6: Discuss & Conclusion

The findings of this study align with existing literature by Kelly et al. (2022) on the global trial of a 4-day workweek reported. The authors mentioned that companies participating in the trial reported positive feedback in job satisfaction, employees expressed excitement and motivation in this trial; the reduced work schedule also led to increased productivity and profitability for some companies, also the trial resulted in decreased turnover intentions by 11% and employees with second jobs intention also reduced from 17% to 12%, suggest a positive impact on reducing turnover rates. There was also growing evidence from other studies such as the CIPD (2022) report, which found that 55% of employers agree that reduced working hours without reduction of pay is a great idea, but they keep sceptical about

the feasibility or efficiency of this transition, they mentioned that it would never happen in their organisation due to the cost, legal constraints, and customer expectations. Our findings support the CIPD report on the feasibility concerns, which 44% believes it may impact on customer service, and 20% believes challenge to meeting deadlines which highlights the operational difficulties. However, the concern about burnout (12%) was unexpected, as a reduced workweek is generally assumed to minimise stress rather than exacerbate it, this indicates that compress workload into fewer days might increase daily work intensity, potentially leading to burnout if not managed properly.

There is a mixed view about productivity in both interviews and online surveys, our online surveys show that 40% of respondents believed a 4-day workweek would somewhat increase their productivity, 36% believed that a 4-day workweek would significantly increase productivity, and 8% think there no change and 8% believed that 4-day workweek might decrease their productivity due to increased workload, there were other 8% of mixed view; from the interview, some believes productivity could increase with effective management, other are sceptical about feasibility in high-workload environments without additional staffing, some participants suggested that monitor the effectiveness of shorter workweek is particularly important to ensure productivity, this was also emphasized in the existing literature reviews, such as Kelly et al. (2022) suggests that a 4-day workweek requires a high level of trust and support from both parties to ensure its success. However, Dirks, K. T. & Ferrin, D. L. (2001) in his '*The Role of Trust in Organizational Settings*' find that when employees feel trusted by their management, they are more likely to exhibit positive outcomes, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and job performance, which in turn enhances their productivity; conversely, excessive monitoring and control can negatively affect intrinsic motivation particularly when employees are perceived as intrusive, this may undermine employees' sense of trust and autonomy, in turn, decrease motivation and productivity (Falk & Kosfeld, 2006). Therefore, when organisations considering transition to a 4-day workweek should focus on building a high level of trust, provide adequate support, and avoid excessive monitoring or control to maintain employee motivation and productivity. Unlike the CIPD report and Kelly et al (2022) reports, some participants in our study preferred the traditional 5-day workweek due to the concerns about compressed workloads during the shorter week, this suggests that for some roles particularly those with high workloads, the 4-day model may not be practical without a reduction in workload or increase in staffing.

There are also limitations in our study, such as a small sample size, a limited number of interview participants, and a lack of a comparative group which may affect the findings, future research with larger and more diverse samples, and comparative groups would be beneficial to fully understand the implications of this alternative work arrangement. Despite these limitations, a strong preference for a 4-day workweek from employees and its perceived positive impact on well-being and work-life balance suggest that this alternative work arrangement could be viable for many organisations, the company may conduct a pilot program, test the concept, and make adjustments if needed. However, the study also underscores the need for careful planning and consideration of industry-specific requirements, for example, service industries may need to adjust rotating schedules or hire additional staff to maintain customer service and expectations, this may lead to resistance among employers regarding the additional staffing costs, therefore, the organisation may adjust their approach based on its operational needs. Additionally, the organisations may establish clear objectives and structured guidelines for the new schedule, use technology to automate tasks, offer training on time management and set performance reviews to track progress to enhance productivity and efficiency; set a goal about expectations and allowing flexibility during the transition period; engage in open communication with employees and involve them in the decision making and planning process to address concerns and build trust. Although some companies may still not adopt a 4-day workweek anytime soon, instead they may turn to other ways to promote work-life balance, such as providing flexible work arrangements, remote work etc. Hopefully, in the future, more and more companies will start with 4-day workweeks or give employees more options to balance work and personal life, this may take a long way to achieve, but I strongly believe that we are in the midst of significant change, and it is up to each of us, every employer, employee, and business leaders to continue to drive that change!

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