



MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

**INFLUENCE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING A 4-  
DAY WORK WEEK ON THE JOB SELECTION  
AMONG HIGHLY EDUCATED MEMBERS OF  
GENERATION Z**

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## Resumen

El reciente auge del interés por la semana laboral de 4 días, que hace referencia a la reducción del número de horas de trabajo necesarias para ser considerado “equivalente a tiempo completo”, coincide con la entrada en el mundo laboral de la Generación Z, correspondiente a los individuos nacidos después de 1995. Por tanto, resulta clave identificar las preferencias de esta cohorte en cuanto a la organización del trabajo para que las empresas puedan mejorar la atracción y retención del talento. Para ello, esta tesis de máster examina la influencia de la posibilidad de tener una semana laboral de 4 días en el proceso de selección de empleo de los individuos de la Generación Z con alto nivel educativo.

Analizando los datos de una encuesta realizada a 103 participantes y cinco entrevistas semiestructuradas, **este estudio demuestra que la semana laboral de cuatro días es una modalidad de trabajo flexible muy valorada por las personas de la Generación Z con un alto nivel educativo.** Este interés por la semana laboral de cuatro días se explica por el alto valor percibido que aporta desde el punto de vista de la vida personal, incluyendo una mejora del equilibrio entre la vida laboral y personal. Este valor añadido se basa principalmente en tener un día libre más a la semana. **No obstante, parece que la semana laboral de cuatro días se percibe actualmente como una ventaja adicional más que como un requisito previo a la hora de elegir un empleo.**

Las conclusiones de este estudio pueden llevar a las empresas a reflexionar sobre la implantación de la semana laboral de 4 días en los próximos años, con la visión de mejorar su atracción y retención del talento de la Generación Z.

**Palabras claves:** Semana laboral de 4 días, Generación Z, Selección de trabajo, Arreglos de trabajo flexible.

## Abstract

The recent surge of interest in the 4-day work week, which refers to a reduction of the number of working hours necessary to be considered working "full time equivalent", coincides with the entry into the world of work of Generation Z, corresponding to individuals born after 1995. The working arrangement preferences of this cohort are therefore key to identifying in order for companies to improve their talent attraction and retention. For this purpose, this master's thesis examines the influence of the possibility of having a 4-day work week on the job selection process of the highly educated Generation Z individuals.

Analyzing data from a survey conducted with 103 participants and five semi-structured interviews, **this study demonstrates that the 4-day work week is a flexible working arrangement highly valued by highly educated Generation Z individuals.** This appeal of the 4-day work week is explained by the perceived high value it brings from a personal life perspective, including an improvement of the work life balance. This added value is mainly based on having an extra day off per week. **Nevertheless, it appears that the 4-day work week is currently seen as an add-on benefit rather than a prerequisite in job choice.**

The findings of this study may lead companies to reflect on the implementation of the 4-day work week in the following years, with a vision of improving their attraction and retention of Generation Z talent.

**Key words:** Four-day work week, Generation Z, Job selection, Flexible working time arrangements.

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## *1. Contextualization and justification of the scope*

The current shift in demographics of the global workforce and the evolution of work patterns have necessitated a reevaluation of traditional hiring processes. This thesis focuses on the new generation currently entering the job market, Generation Z, or Gen Z, and more specifically its highly educated members. Generation Z individuals, also called Gen Zers, are defined as individuals born in 1995 and after (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2014; Barhate & Dirani, 2022). The thesis is intended to evaluate their job selection preferences, particularly in relation to the concept of a 4-day work week (4DWW). The 4DWW does not necessarily imply working 4 days, it refers to a reduction of the number of working hours necessary to be considered working "full time equivalent". It is different from four-days' work for 80% of a full-time pay, and from a condensed work week (36-40h in less than 5 days) (Chung, 2022).

The importance of human capital in the success of an organization cannot be overstated. Recruitment, as a key activity for all companies, plays a pivotal role in acquiring and retaining the right talent (Acikgoz, 2019). As the generational pool for recruitment changes, so too must the talent attraction process to adapt to the new potential employees (Acikgoz, 2019). The current shift in the candidates' pool sees the influx of Generation Z into the job market (Walker & Fontinha, 2019), making it crucial for organizations to understand and adapt to the unique characteristics and needs of this cohort.

Generation Z, like every generation before it, seeks specific organizational and work environment characteristics when searching for employment. These characteristics include, compensation, company values, and other benefits (Acikgoz, 2019). However, the job market that Generation Z is entering is unique in its nature. It is a job seekers' market, with companies more eager than ever to attract and retain talents, thereby providing highly qualified Generation Z individuals with more choices regarding the positions and companies they work for (Stansell, 2019).



In this context, the possibility of a 4DWW could significantly influence the job selection process of highly educated Generation Z members. The 4DWW, as a non-traditional work arrangement, could be perceived as an additional benefit that companies offer, thereby potentially attracting more Generation Z applicants. This thesis, therefore, seeks to explore the extent to which the possibility of a 4DWW influences the job selection process among highly educated members of Generation Z.

The justification for the scope of this thesis lies in the confluence of several factors. Firstly, the ongoing generational shift in the workforce necessitates an understanding of the preferences and values of the incoming Generation Z. Secondly, the changing nature of work and the increasing acceptance of non-traditional work arrangements, such as the 4DWW, require an investigation into their impact on job selection. Lastly, the highly educated members of Generation Z, thanks to their qualifications, may have more leverage in choosing jobs that align with their preferences, making them an interesting cohort to study.

In conclusion, this thesis aims to provide insights into the influence of the possibility of having a 4DWW on job selection among highly educated Generation Z members. The findings of this study could potentially inform recruitment strategies and work structure designs, enabling organizations to better attract and retain Generation Z talents. The research will be grounded in the scientific literature provided, ensuring a comprehensive and rigorous approach to the investigation.

Following a presentation of the methodological approach employed in this study, we will proceed to a comprehensive review of the pertinent literature. This will be followed by a presentation of the results and their accompanying discussion, after which a brief conclusion will be offered to summarize the study's key findings.

## *2. Objectives and scope of the study*

The proposed master's thesis, titled "Influence of the possibility of having a 4 days' work week on the job selection among highly educated members of Generation Z," aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the 4-day work week (4DWW) on the employment selection process of this demographic. The thesis is guided by the following objectives:

### **General Objective:**

The primary objective of this study is to determine the extent to which the possibility of adopting a 4DWW positively influences the job selection process among highly educated Generation Z members.

### **Specific Objectives:**

- To examine the influence of work-life balance flexibility on the career aspirations of highly educated Generation Z members. This objective will particularly focus on how the 4DWW option may align with their professional goals and values. The study will explore the importance of work-life balance for Generation Z, the role of flexibility in their career decisions, and how the 4DWW could potentially meet their expectations.
- To analyze the potential concerns and reservations of highly educated Generation Z individuals regarding the implications of transitioning to a 4DWW. By understanding the potential apprehensions, the study aims to provide insights into how organizations can address these concerns to effectively attract and retain Generation Z talents.
- To assess the importance of the option to adopt a 4DWW in relation to other factors for highly educated Generation Z members when selecting an employer. This objective acknowledges the multifaceted nature of job selection and aims to position the 4DWW within the broader context of employment considerations. The study will evaluate the

relative importance of the 4DWW compared to other factors such as compensation, company values, and other benefits.

- To identify potential variations in the perception of the 4DWW based on socio-demographic factors. This objective aims to understand the diversity within Generation Z and how socio-demographic factors may influence their perceptions of the 4DWW. The study will explore how factors such as gender and education level may shape the attitudes of Generation Z towards the 4DWW.

The scope of this study is defined by the objectives outlined above. The research will focus on highly educated members of Generation Z, defined as individuals born in 1995 and after who have or will have a higher education diploma in a few years. The study will be conducted within the context of the current job market, characterized by the arrival of Generation Z into the workforce and the increasing acceptance of non-traditional work arrangements.

In conclusion, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature on the employment preferences of Generation Z and the impact of non-traditional work arrangements on job selection. The findings of this research could potentially inform recruitment strategies and work structure designs, enabling organizations to better attract and retain Generation Z talents. The study will adhere to academic rigor, ensuring a comprehensive and unbiased investigation of the research problem.

### *3. Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals*

The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) provide a global framework for addressing pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. The chapter aims to assess the implication of this thesis regarding sustainable development. Two main SDG have been identified as key goals in the context of this work:

- **SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being.** The evaluation of the impact of a flexible working time arrangement like the 4-day work week (4DWW) is part of a commitment to studying ways of improving work-life balance, and indirectly employees' well-being and health. Indeed, the 4DWW could provide employees with more time for rest, personal activities, and family. This could potentially reduce stress and burnouts, leading to improved mental and physical health. The extra day-off could also allow employees to engage in health-promoting activities, such as exercise, hobbies, or medical appointments, which they may struggle to fit into a traditional 5-day work week.
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.** The 4DWW could contribute significantly to promoting work-life balance, a crucial aspect of decent work. The additional day off could provide employees with more time for rest, personal activities, and family, potentially reducing stress and burnout. This, in turn, could lead to increased productivity and job satisfaction during the four working days. However, it is essential to ensure that the reduction in working hours does not result in job losses or increased work intensity. The 4DWW has the potential to stimulate economic growth by providing employees with more time to engage in other income-generating activities or education.

In conclusion, this master's thesis aims to contribute positively to SDG 3 and SDG 8. However, it is crucial to carefully consider and address potential challenges to ensure that the benefits are realized, and negative impacts are minimized. Further research will be needed to fully understand the potential social and environmental impacts of the 4DWW.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

### *1. Methodological approach*

To achieve the objectives previously outlined in this final master's thesis, a dual approach was employed. Firstly, a critical literature review was conducted to identify the main findings on the implementation of the 4-day work week and its benefits and drawbacks, but also on the Generation Z perspective about work and the main criteria used by this generation to select a job. Academic database platforms, such as Google Scholar, were utilized to search for relevant articles. The search employed combinations of keywords, such as '4-day work week' or '4DWW', 'job selection' with 'Generation Z' or 'Gen Z' for a more general approach. To investigate more specific topics, we expanded the initial search by adding new keywords such as 'socioeconomic factors', 'work characteristics' or 'values' to the previous combinations.

Secondly, given the lack of studies that relate to the 4-day work week consequences, especially to the job selection process among Generation Z individuals, a quantitative study was chosen to assess the importance of the possibility of having a 4-day work week among Generation Z individuals with higher education when choosing a job. To investigate whether this possibility would be attractive to them, a survey was created using Microsoft Forms. Leveraging the student network of the researcher, a population of 103 people was surveyed, using the snowball effect and without the use of any economic incentives. More specifically, the survey was first sent to close relationships, who also sent it out to some relationships, then shared through LinkedIn, to reach a wider group of people. Since the target audience of the survey was not restricted to one country, the questions were written in English to ease the comprehension of all participants.

To complement the survey results, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 5 individuals who previously answered the questionnaire. These individuals were chosen to cover a variety of societal factors.

## *2. Survey Description*

The survey consisted of five sections, which are explained below.

### **a. General Information**

This section comprises five questions about the participants' demographics, academic and professional characteristics, namely gender, birth year, nationality, professional situation (including education level and whether is currently working or studying), and major field of study. This is intended to segregate the results of the survey and deepen the analysis of the results.

### **b. Working values**

This part of the survey includes two questions about the key job characteristics valued by the respondent when choosing a work position or working for a company.

The first question ask the respondent to value from 1 to 5 the importance of the following work characteristics when considering a job offer: 'Potential for career growth / opportunities', 'Flexible working time schedule', 'Working from home possibility', 'Qualitative mentoring and feedback', 'Good working relationships and atmosphere', 'Work autonomy', 'Accountability and responsibilities', 'Good salary', 'Corporate social and environmental responsibilities' and 'Professional training and formation'.

The second question is a ranking of three criteria by order of importance when searching for a job. The three criteria under valuation are 'Great work-life balance', 'Positive company culture and environment', and 'Career evolution opportunities'. This question aims to classify the Generation Z individuals in three different subcategories: Social Investors, Chill Worker Bees, and Go Betters. The Social investors value more highly work-life balance, while Chill

Worker Bees expect a comfortable workplace environment, and Go Betters are focused on their career evolution (Leslie and al., 2021).

### c. Flexible working time schedule arrangements

This subpart is composed of five questions about the perception of different flexible working time schedule arrangements of the respondents. It aims to assess their preference and aptence in terms of working time schedule.

The first question asks the respondents to evaluate from 1 to 5 the importance of flexibility in working time arrangements when it comes to choosing a job.

Then, the audience is asked to check all the flexible working options that are appealing to them when selecting a job position. The options proposed are the following: ‘Part-time hours’, ‘Flexible start and finish times’, ‘Remote work (working from home every day)’, ‘Working from home some days’, ‘Compressed working week’ and ‘4-day working week’. The respondent is also allowed to add other options. It is specified that compressed working week refers to working the standard number of weekly working hours necessary to be considered working "full time equivalent" in only 4 days, while 4-day working week refers to working a reduced number of working hours necessary to be considered working "full time equivalent" (about 32h/week) without any pay cut (Chung, 2022).

The third and fourth questions are open questions about the benefits and challenges foreseen to flexible working arrangements.

Finally, the respondents have to value from 1 to 5 the impact that flexible working hours may have on their work life balance and well-being.

#### d. The 4-day work week

This section comprises six questions about the 4-day work week and is intended to evaluate whether the 4-day work week could be a factor in the job selection of the audience.

First, the respondents are asked if they had ever heard about the 4-day work week before completing the questionnaire.

Then, they evaluate whether they would consider the possibility of having a 4-day work week a factor when choosing a job. They have the option between 'Yes, a key factor', 'Yes, a secondary factor' and 'No'.

The third and fourth questions are open questions about the benefits and challenges foreseen to the 4-day work week.

After, the audience is asked to select all the activities they would use an extra day-off to take on. The options proposed are 'Meet up with friends', 'Meet up with family', 'Take part in sport or fitness activities', 'Study or improve your skills for personal interest', 'Study or improve your skills relating to your job or career', 'Take up a new hobby', 'Volunteering', 'Go on other outdoor activities', 'Take on extra work somewhere else'. Adding other options is also possible for the respondents.

Finally, the respondents are asked to specify the diminution of salary they would accept to go from a 5-day work week to a 4-day work week. The four options are '0%', '0-5%', '5-10%', and '10-15%'.

#### e. Comments and follow-up

This section comprises three non-mandatory questions. The first one is an open question about eventual extra-comments or thinking of the respondents. If interested, the audience is invited to let an email address to eventually participate in a face-to-face interview to go deeper into the subject and receive the results of the survey and the associated analysis.



### *3. Sample description*

As showcased in the table below (see Figure 1), the target sample is comprised of 103 participants born between 1995 and 2005. 45,6% of the respondents were male, while 52,4% were female. Moreover, the two nationalities most represented are French and Spanish with 44,7% and 16,5% of the respondents. As a reminder, the participants were able to declare more than one nationality, which explains the sum of the percentage being superior to 100% in the table below. Regarding the educational and professional situation, 81,6% of the audience were students, and the most prevalent level of education is master's degree with 69,9% of the participants owning or studying a master's degree. Finally, Engineering & Technologies, and Business & Economics were the most common educational fields with respectively 37.9% and 32% of participants.

Socio-demographic Factors	Value	Share of respondents
Gender	<i>Male</i>	45,6%
	<i>Female</i>	52,4%
	<i>Non-binary</i>	0,0%
	<i>Prefer not to say</i>	1,9%
	<i>Other</i>	0,0%
Birth Year	1995	7,8%
	1996	2,9%
	1997	5,8%
	1998	6,8%
	1999	17,5%
	2000	26,2%
	2001	15,5%
	2002	6,8%
	2003	6,8%
	2004	3,9%
2005	0,0%	
Citizenship(s)	<i>American</i>	4,9%
	<i>French</i>	44,7%
	<i>German</i>	8,7%
	<i>Italian</i>	4,9%
	<i>Spanish</i>	16,5%
	<i>Other</i>	27,2%
Academic/Professional situation	<i>Bachelor's degree student or equivalent</i>	18,4%
	<i>Master's degree student or equivalent</i>	59,2%
	<i>PhD's degree student or equivalent</i>	3,9%
	<i>Working with a bachelor's degree</i>	7,8%
	<i>Working with a master's degree</i>	10,7%
	<i>Working with a PhD's degree</i>	0,0%
Academic major field of studies	<i>Business &amp; Economics</i>	32,0%
	<i>Engineering &amp; Technologies</i>	37,9%
	<i>Computer sciences</i>	6,8%
	<i>Other</i>	23,3%

**Figure 1.** Sample distribution of the target audience

#### *4. Interviews description*

To complement the quantitative results of the survey, face-to-face interviews were conducted with five different respondents to the questionnaire to gain qualitative input.

A semi-structured style of interviews was used. A few questions were previously prepared, whereas other additional questions may be added to explore certain aspects of the topic. Three main questions were prepared in order to tackle three main subjects.

The first guiding question asked is the following: “What do you value most when looking for a job?”. With this question and potential derived questions, we intend to seek to better understand the motivations and key factors in the interviewee's job search.

Then, the second part of the interview is intended to deep dive into the opinion of the interviewee about the 4-day work week. To this end, the talk is organized around the following leading question: “What do you think about the concept of a 4-day work week?”.

Finally, the last leading question of the interview is “To what extent would you value a 4DWW when evaluating new job opportunities?”. This part is intended to better understand how the interviewee values the opportunity of having a 4-day work week when choosing a job.

The transcripts of the interviews are available in the Appendix section.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 1. *Historical evolution of the 4-day work week*

The concept of a 4-day work week (4DWW) has been a topic of interest for scholars and researchers for several decades. The 4DWW was first proposed in the 1950s but did not attract significant attention until the early 1970s (Campbell, 2023). It was in the 1970s that the idea gained significant traction in both the American popular press and academia, with labor unions' cautious support and management's growing curiosity (Hedges, 1971). This surge of interest was likely influenced by the socio-economic crisis of the time, specifically the oil crisis (Campbell, 2023; Chung, 2022). However, “the 4-day workweek [had] caught the imagination of the public. It [had] intrigued management and [was] winning guarded support from labor organizations. But the big question [was] unanswered: Is a breakthrough from a 5-day to a 4-day week imminent?” (Hedges, 1971, p.33).

The idea of a reduced work week as a restructuring of labor was further explored in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. For instance, the reduction of the standard number of weekly working hours from 39 to 35 in France in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century led to increases in job creation and productivity rates, both at micro and macro levels. This reduction also allowed for more flexibility in working arrangements, although it required increased state subsidies (Askenazy, 2013).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century saw a resurgence of interest in the 4DWW, with two distinct periods of research activity: the first from 2008 to 2012, and the second beginning in 2019 (Campbell, 2023). These periods coincided with significant socio-economic crises, namely the subprime crisis in 2008 and the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019 (Campbell, 2023; Chung, 2022). Particularly, the pandemic raised societal challenges such as the deterioration of workers' mental health and increasing social and gender inequalities, further fueling the interest in alternative work arrangements like the 4DWW (Chung, 2022).

In recent years, several countries have conducted experiments with the 4DWW. Iceland, for instance, trialed a shorter work week between 2015 and 2017, with 2500 workers (1% of

Iceland's workforce) experiencing a 35- or 36-hours work week without pay reduction (Haraldsson & Kellam, 2021). By 2021, 86% of the workforce was either working shorter hours or had gained the right to do so (Haraldsson & Kellam, 2021). Similar trials were set up in Scotland in 2021 (Kelly, 2021), and Spain and Japan agreed to a 3-year trial without salary reduction (Kelly, 2021).

The organizational constraints of implementing a 4DWW have been a key concern for human resources directors. It has been found that around 70% of them believe that management should control the schedule (West, Condrey, & Rush, 2010). However, the positives were seen to outweigh the negatives, with many favoring the implementation of the 4DWW first in selected groups of employees before a global rollout within the company (West, Condrey, & Rush, 2010).

In terms of business support, it has been reported that about two-thirds of businesses in the UK backed a 4DWW, with three-fifths open to implementing it in their companies (Pheby, 2023). Large and medium companies were more likely to favor the idea and be willing to implement it than smaller ones. Furthermore, 40% believed it would improve national productivity, with 20% believing it would lead to no change (Pheby, 2023).

In conclusion, the 4DWW has evolved from a concept of interest in the mid-20th century to a practical reality in the 21st century. Its evolution has been influenced by socio-economic crises, with businesses and countries increasingly open to its implementation. The potential benefits, such as improved productivity and job creation, along with the challenges, such as organizational constraints, continue to be explored in ongoing research and trials.

## *2. Benefits and concerns of the 4DWW*

### *a. The influence on productivity*

The relationship between working hours and productivity has been a topic of interest in both academic and business circles. Traditionally, working long hours has been perceived as a sign of productivity, commitment, and self-worth in societies (Chung, 2022). However, the

implementation of a 4-day work week (4DWW) has challenged this norm, with employees reporting productivity gains following its introduction (Chung, 2022).

The idea of implementing a 4DWW to increase productivity was initially introduced by the management of companies (Hedges, 1971). This suggests that originally the concept was not a mere worker-led initiative for better work-life balance, but also a strategic move by management to enhance productivity.

However, the impact of flexible work arrangements, such as flex work and compressed work weeks (CWW), on productivity remains unclear. Despite no definitive conclusion being found on the matter of productivity of a company, it has been noted that shorter hours could lead to higher rates of output per hour, suggesting a potential productivity benefit of reduced work hours (Golden, 2012). Empirical evidence on the impact of a 4DWW on productivity is mixed. On the one hand, no improvement had been observed in productivity in two similar factories from the same company after transitioning from a 5-day, 40-hour work week to a 4-day, 38-hour work week (Calvasina and Boxx, 1975). This finding contrasts with the perceived productivity gains reported by employees in other studies (Chung, 2022).

More recent trials of a shorter working week in Iceland showed that company's productivity and service provision were maintained at the same levels following the change (Haraldsson & Kellam, 2021). This suggests that a reduction in working hours does not necessarily lead to a decrease in global productivity.

A literature review of various experimentations of a 4DWW found no conclusive evidence of its impact on productivity at the company level (Campbell, 2023). This highlights the need for further research to fully understand the relationship between working hours and productivity.

In conclusion, the influence of a 4DWW on productivity remains a contested issue. While some studies suggest that shorter working hours can lead to higher productivity rates, especially higher hourly productivity rates, others find no significant change or improvement. The mixed findings underscore the complexity of the relationship between working hours and productivity, and the need for more research to draw definitive conclusions.

## b. Benefits of the 4-day work week

The implementation of a 4DWW has been shown to have numerous benefits for both employers and employees (Chung, 2022).

Most of the companies that have set up a 4DWW have experienced favorable outcomes. These outcomes include increased morale, job satisfaction, cost reductions, reduced turnover and absenteeism, and easier recruitment (Campbell, 2023). More precisely, the benefits of the 4DWW for companies include better talent attraction and retention, increased employee satisfaction, lower employee sickness levels, and increased productivity and quality of work (Walker & Fontinha, 2019). This suggests that the 4DWW can have a positive impact on a range of company outcomes related to talent management and productivity.

Moreover, long working hours have been found to negatively affect not only the employee's well-being but also their families', fostering labor market inequalities and a decline in social cohesion (Chung, 2022). On top of that, it contributes to the stigmatization of non-working individuals (Chung, 2022). A shift towards a 4-day work week could mitigate these issues. Indeed, a reduced work week has positive impacts on family life, mental health, and physical fitness of employees (Walker & Fontinha, 2019), and a reduction in the number of working days leads to less job stress, thereby improving work life balance and productivity (Page, Escobar, Ruaya & Sulit, 2020).

In terms of health benefits, shortening work hours leads to increased exercise among employees, particularly among women and older groups (Ahn, 2016). Additionally, reducing working hours decreases the likelihood of smoking, especially among men and middle-aged groups (Ahn, 2016). These findings suggest that a 4-day work week could have significant health benefits for employees, potentially leading to a healthier and more active workforce. The shorter work week trials in Iceland provided further evidence of the benefits of a 4-day work week, reporting an increase in employee wellbeing (Haraldsson & Kellam, 2021). This also suggests that a reduced work week could be a viable strategy for improving overall employee wellbeing.

Furthermore, the implementation of a 4-day work week has shown positive outcomes in terms of employee morale and productivity. Employees reported improvements in these areas during a shorter work week trial (Calvasina and Boxx, 1975). Additionally, they noted a reduction in absenteeism and turnover (Calvasina and Boxx, 1975), suggesting that a 4-day work week could improve employee retention and attendance.

The environmental impact of a 4-day work week is also noteworthy. It drives a reduction in fuel consumption and pollution (Walker & Fontinha, 2019), suggesting that a reduced work week could be a sustainable solution for businesses aiming to reduce their environmental footprint.

To go deeper, the attractiveness of a 4DWW to employees is primarily due to the promise of one more day off. This additional day off is perceived as an individual benefit, with employees viewing the advantages of a 4DWW as primarily personal rather than collective (Delaney & Casey, 2022). This suggests that the appeal of a reduced work week essentially lies in the potential for increased work-life balance and the opportunity for employees to pursue personal interests and activities.

Moreover, the improvement of job satisfaction due to the adoption of a 4DWW has been found to be mainly due to the better distribution and usability of leisure time (Allen & Hawes, 1979). This suggests that the appeal of a 4DWW may not necessarily be related to the actual job tasks or responsibilities, but rather to the ability to have more control over one's time and the opportunity to engage in leisure activities.

Additionally, the appeal of a 4DWW may also come from the ability to escape unsatisfying work situations, such as routine or monotonous jobs (Allen & Hawes, 1979). However, the previous point regarding the better distribution and usability of leisure time is prevalent, suggesting that the primary motivation for employees' interest in a 4DWW is the potential for improved work-life balance and personal fulfillment (Allen & Hawes, 1979).

In conclusion, the implementation of a 4DWW has numerous benefits for both employers and employees. These benefits include increased morale, job satisfaction, cost reductions, reduced turnover and absenteeism, easier recruitment, positive impacts on family life, mental health, and physical fitness, a reduction in fuel consumption and pollution, and an



increase in well-being. Additionally, a 4DWW can help mitigate the negative effects of long working hours on employees, their families and society.

### c. Concerns about the 4-day work week

Despite having gained attention as a potential way to improve work-life balance and increase productivity, the implementation of a 4-day work week also raised some concerns and related negative outcomes have been identified in scientific literature.

One concern for employers is the potential reduction in time available to customers, especially for smaller businesses (Walker & Fontinha, 2019). This could lead to a decrease in customer satisfaction and ultimately affect the bottom line. Additionally, employers may struggle with how to implement and manage a 4DWW, as it requires significant changes to traditional work schedules and practices (Walker & Fontinha, 2019).

Employees also have concerns about how opting for a shorter work week could be viewed by colleagues and managers and potentially negatively affect their careers (Walker & Fontinha, 2019).

Furthermore, "in order to gain some freedom from work, employees were prepared to relinquish freedom in work" (Delaney and Casey, 2022), suggesting that the 4DWW may be viewed as an escape from work rather than a tool to better tackle it. This could lead to performance measurement, monitoring, and productivity pressures being intensified, as employers feel the need to ensure that employees are still productive despite working fewer hours (Delaney & Casey, 2022).

On top of that, the intensification of work and increased workload on the day back after a day off can lead to worker fatigue (Allen & Howes, 1979). This could result in decreased productivity and increased absenteeism, ultimately negating any potential benefits of a 4DWW. Additionally, the increased pressure to perform and meet productivity targets could lead to stress and burnout among employees (Campbell, 2023).

Interestingly, it has been found that a diminution of work hours causes an increase in drinking participation, while not affecting frequent or daily drinking habits. This suggests that sometimes employees may use their extra free time in ways that are not necessarily beneficial to their overall well-being and could potentially lead to other negative outcomes such as increased absenteeism and decreased productivity (Ahn, 2016).

In conclusion, while a 4DWW may offer potential benefits such as improved work-life balance and increased productivity, it is important to consider the concerns and challenges associated with its implementation. Employers must consider the potential impact on customer satisfaction and the practicalities of implementing and managing a 4DWW. Employees, on the other hand, must consider how opting for a shorter work week could be viewed by colleagues and managers, and the potential for increased performance measurement, monitoring, and productivity pressures. Additionally, the intensification of work and increased workload on the day back after a day off, as well as the potential for increased drinking participation, should be considered. Careful implementation and planning are necessary to ensure that the benefits of a 4DWW outweigh the potential drawbacks.

### *3. Generation Z perspective on work*

#### *a. Generational characteristics of the Generation Z*

Generation Z, also known as Gen Z, is a cohort of individuals born in 1995 and after (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2014). A generation is defined as a group of people born in the same span of years who have experienced similar events at the same development stages of their lives (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Gen Z is unique in that they are the first generation to be considered "global" (Maioli, 2017). This is because they have grown up in the context of globalization and have lived in a digital world from their birth. They consider social media and technology as an essential part of their lives, and, as a result, they are also referred to as Digital Natives or the iGeneration (Maioli, 2017).

Generation Z individuals, also referred as Gen Zers, are more open-minded than previous generations and are globally against any type of discrimination (Aggarwal, Sadhna, Gupta, Mittal & Rastogi, 2022). They are also more liberal and concerned about socio-environmental challenges such as climate change and social inequalities (Maioli, 2017). However, they tend to adopt an individualistic and direct approach to communicating (Maioli, 2017). Also, Gen Zers have a shorter attention span than previous generations and bore easily (Maioli, 2017).

The possibility of having a 4-day work week may be particularly appealing to Gen Zers due to their value of work-life balance and flexibility. Additionally, the shorter work week may align with their desire for personal and professional growth, as it allows for more time to pursue personal interests and development. However, it is important to note that Gen Zers' shorter attention span and tendency to bore easily may present challenges in a 4-day work week. Employers may need to consider ways to keep Gen Zers engaged and motivated in their work, such as offering varied tasks and opportunities for learning and development.

In conclusion, Gen Zers are a unique cohort with distinct characteristics and values. They are more open-minded, globally minded and concerned about socio-environmental challenges than previous generations. Employers should carefully consider the challenges of engaging and motivating this generation in the workplace.

#### **b. Generation Z relation to work**

The shifting dynamics of the workforce have been a subject of interest for scholars and researchers, particularly as new generations enter the labor market.

Each generation brings with it unique orientations and attitudes towards work, and Generation Z is no exception. However, while each generation exhibits different orientations and attitudes at work, they all tend to maintain a similar level of commitment (Benson & Brown, 2011). This suggests that despite the distinctive characteristics of Generation Z, their commitment to work is likely to be comparable to that of previous generations.

Delving deeper into the characteristics of Generation Z, it is apparent that they value different aspects of the work environment and job characteristics compared to their predecessors. Despite these differences, differences in the work outcomes of different generations are largely non-existent in most cases (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt & Gade, 2012). This implies that while Generation Z may have unique preferences for their work environment and job characteristics, these differences do not necessarily translate into significant variations in work outcomes.

Moreover, Generation Z individuals tend to have well-defined career expectations and career development plans. This indicates that Generation Z is a proactive and goal-oriented cohort when it comes to their careers (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). However, the work behavior of Generation Z is still difficult to assess, as they have only recently entered the workforce (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). This highlights the need for further research to fully understand the work behavior of this generation.

In terms of needs and preferences, Generation Z values development, mentoring, and good working relationships. This suggests that Generation Z is not only focused on their own career advancement but also on building strong professional relationships and learning from experienced colleagues (Iorgulescu, 2016; Loring & Wang, 2022). This attitude is reflected in Generation Z members actively seeking mentoring in the workplace (Loring & Wang, 2022).

Furthermore, giving Generation Z more control over their jobs and providing them with incentives is an effective way to boost their work engagement. This implies that Generation Z values autonomy and incentives in their work, which could be important factors for organizations to consider when designing jobs and compensation packages for this generation (Loring & Wang, 2022).

Work-life balance and job satisfaction are known to have a positive impact on the performance of millennials and Generation Z at work. This implies that organizations that prioritize work-life balance and job satisfaction are likely to see improved performance from these generations (Waworuntu, Kainde & Mangadi, 2022). Moreover, Generation Z is more idealistic in its search for work and career growth, indicating that this generation values

meaningful work and career development opportunities (Waworuntu, Kainde & Mangadi, 2022).

In terms of job satisfaction, both millennials and Generation Z highly value a supportive working environment, supportive superiors, and career opportunities. This suggests that organizations that provide a positive and supportive work environment, as well as opportunities for career growth, are likely to see higher levels of job satisfaction among these generations (Waworuntu, Kainde & Mangadi, 2022). Both millennials and Generation Z also highly value working hours flexibility, annual leave duration, and working from home. This indicates that these generations prioritize flexibility and work-life balance when choosing a job (Waworuntu, Kainde & Mangadi, 2022). This is supported by Gen Zers preferring flexible working schedules over traditional ones in order to achieve a good work-life balance (Maioli, 2017).

Four main factors that lead to motivation at work among Generation Z have been identified: job enabling growth opportunities, organization support, accountability, and interaction feedback (Dwivedula & Singh, 2020). This highlights that Generation Z values opportunities for personal and professional growth, support from their organization, clear expectations and responsibilities, and regular feedback and interaction.

Employee engagement is a step higher than job satisfaction and corresponds to commitment to the company. In correlation study, six factors were found to be positively correlated with work engagement for Generation Z employees: corporate social responsibility, leadership (transformational and transactional), work-life balance, autonomy, and technology (Lee, Aravamudhan, Roback & Ruane, 2021). Of these six factors, transformational leadership had the highest positive influence on work engagement among Generation Z. Transformational leadership involves inspiring and motivating employees to exceed their own individual performance goals for the benefit of the organization (Lee, Aravamudhan, Roback & Ruane, 2021). This once again suggests that Generation Z values leaders who inspire and motivate them to achieve their best.

Furthermore, autonomy and work-life balance also have a positive impact on work engagement among Generation Z individuals. This indicates that Generation Z highly values having control over their work and the ability to balance their professional and personal lives (Lee, Aravamudhan, Roback & Ruane, 2021). Interestingly, technology and corporate social

responsibility has been found to have no or low impact on work engagement among Generation Z. This suggests that while technology and corporate social responsibility may be important factors for Generation Z, they are not as important as other factors such as transformational leadership, autonomy, and work-life balance when it comes to work engagement (Lee, Aravamudhan, Roback & Ruane, 2021).

Therefore, the main expectations of Generation Z in their work are a good working atmosphere, respect for the employee, and work stability, indicating that Generation Z values a positive and respectful work environment, as well as job security (Ratajczak, 2020). Furthermore, the possibility to access training and formations, and flexible hours are two other important criteria for Generation Z when searching for jobs (Ratajczak, 2020).

A study on the keywords that Gen Zers use to describe the pros and cons of their jobs found that 'work environment', 'flexible hours', and 'good pay' are the most used keywords by Generation Z to describe the pros of their jobs (Stansell, 2019). This indicates that Generation Z values a positive work environment, flexible hours, and competitive compensation when searching for jobs. Moreover, flexible hours and schedule is a requirement that is typical to this generation, while a good working environment and good pay were already looked for among the previous generation, the Millennials (Stansell, 2019). Interestingly, it has been found that 'long hours' and 'low pay' are the most common keywords used by Generation Z to describe the cons of their work position (Stansell, 2019). This suggests that Generation Z is concerned about working long hours for low pay and prioritizes jobs that offer a good work-life balance and competitive compensation.

Generation Z is also reputed to be open to switch jobs very easily (Aggarwal, Sadhna, Gupta, Mittal & Rastogi, 2022). This could indicate that Generation Z is more mobile and less loyal to their employers compared to previous generations. This could be due to a variety of factors, such as a desire for career growth and development, a need for more challenging work, or a lack of job satisfaction. However, the fact that Generation Z values work stability while being known for changing jobs more often than previous generations (Ratajczak, 2020), emphasizes that they switch jobs because of the conditions, not because they like to change jobs. This indicates that Generation Z is willing to leave jobs that do not meet their expectations in terms of work environment, flexibility, and compensation.

Indeed, about 65% of Generation Z plan to leave their companies within a year. The main causes of this are job dissatisfaction and burnouts (Lever, 2022). This suggests that Generation Z is more likely to leave their jobs if they are dissatisfied with their work or if they are experiencing burnout.

However, Generation Z is a diverse and complex group with varying values, attitudes, and expectations when it comes to work. Three main subgroups within Generation Z have been identified: Social Investors, Chill Worker Bees, and Go Betters. These subgroups differ in their values, attitudes, and expectations towards work, and understanding these differences is important for organizations looking to attract and retain Generation Z talent (Leslie, Anderson, Horman, Overly, Gentry, Callahan & King, 2021). The Social Investors value work-life balance more highly compared to the other subgroups (Leslie, Anderson, Horman, Overly, Gentry, Callahan & King, 2021). This suggests that Social Investors prioritize a balanced lifestyle and are more likely to be attracted to jobs that offer flexible work arrangements, such as a 4-day work week. The Chill Worker Bees, on the other hand, expect a comfortable workplace environment talent (Leslie, Anderson, Horman, Overly, Gentry, Callahan & King, 2021). This suggests that Chill Worker Bees prioritize a positive and supportive work environment and are more likely to be attracted to jobs that offer a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Furthermore, Chill Worker Bees are more likely to be motivated by job security and stability and are attracted to organizations that offer a sense of community and belonging. Finally, the Go Betters are focused on their career evolution talent (Leslie, Anderson, Horman, Overly, Gentry, Callahan & King, 2021). This suggests that Go Betters prioritize career growth and development and are more likely to be attracted to jobs that offer opportunities for advancement and learning. Furthermore, Go Betters are more likely to be motivated by challenges and opportunities to make an impact, and are attracted to organizations that offer a dynamic and innovative work environment. All three subgroups within Generation Z value companies with high morale and ethics talent (Leslie, Anderson, Horman, Overly, Gentry, Callahan & King, 2021). This indicates that Generation Z is more likely to be attracted to organizations that have a positive culture and strong ethical values, regardless of their specific values and priorities.

In conclusion, Gen Zers are a unique cohort with distinct characteristics and values. They are more open-minded, globally minded, and concerned about socio-environmental challenges than previous generations. They value work-life balance, flexibility, and personal



and professional growth in their job selection. The possibility of a 4-day work week may be particularly appealing to Gen Zers, but employers must also consider the challenges of engaging and motivating this generation in the workplace.

#### *4. Main criteria for job selection*

##### *a. Job selection processes*

Recruitment is a critical process for organizations to attract and select the best possible candidates for new or vacated positions. Recruitment is “the first step in the process of matching job descriptions and applicant specifications with people. The process of recruitment involves surveying all sources of personnel, inside and outside the organization, to locate and attract the best possible candidates for new or vacated positions. The organization actively seeks candidates by advertising both internally and externally in newspapers and professional and technical publications, through search organizations, notices, and personal contacts” (Tracey, 2004, p.566). Therefore, recruitment corresponds to the process and activities in which employers attract and select a person for a vacancy among various applicants (Acikgoz, 2019). This suggests that recruitment involves not only attracting candidates, but also selecting the best candidate for the position.

The process of recruitment can be broken down into several stages. The first stage involves identifying the vacancy and the required qualifications and skills for the position. This is followed by advertising the position and attracting candidates through various channels, such as job postings, social media, and recruitment agencies. The next stage involves screening and evaluating candidates through various methods, such as resumes, cover letters, and interviews. The final stage involves selecting and hiring the best candidate for the position (Acikgoz, 2019).

Effective recruitment is critical for organizations to attract and retain the best talent. This involves not only attracting many candidates, but also selecting the best candidate for the position. This can be achieved by using a variety of recruitment methods and channels, and by



carefully evaluating candidates based on their qualifications, skills, and fit with the organization (Tracey, 2004).

A survey of 57,000 job applicants over a 30-year period after World War II found that job selection and job satisfaction factors are very similar (Jurgensen, 1978). This suggests that the factors that influence an individual's decision to accept a job offer are also important for their job satisfaction. The study found that men and women had different expectations when it came to job selection and satisfaction. Men valued security, advancement, and company, while women valued company, security, and co-workers. These results were quite constant over the 30-year span, although pay and benefits have had an increasing importance (Jurgensen, 1978). The increasing importance of pay and benefits is also consistent with others research. For example, a study by Glassdoor found that salary and compensation are the top factors that influence job satisfaction (Stansell, 2019). This suggests that organizations offering competitive pay and benefits may be key criteria of job selection.

A four rounds survey conducted between 1989 and 2015 in 19 high-income western countries to investigate the job characteristics highly valued by candidates found that secure and interesting jobs have been the most highly valued jobs by candidates over time (Esser & Lindh, 2018). Furthermore, the study found that the job characteristics looked for by candidates have been stable over this period (Esser & Lindh, 2018). In addition to secure and interesting jobs, the study found that autonomy, high income, advancement opportunities, and jobs perceived as useful to society or helpful to others are job characteristics which have also been highly valued by candidates in this period (Esser & Lindh, 2018). The study also found that the more a job corresponds to a worker's expectations, the better outputs he or she will have (Esser & Lindh, 2018). This suggests that when a job aligns with a candidate's expectations, they are more likely to be satisfied and perform well in their role.

In conclusion, the job selection process involves matching job requirements with applicant specifications, attracting potential candidates, screening and evaluating their qualifications, and selecting the best candidate for the job. Job selection and job satisfaction factors are very similar, and secure and interesting jobs have been the most highly valued jobs by candidates over time. However, the job selection process has always evolved due to the

changing nature of work and the emergence of new technologies and is influenced by generational differences.

#### b. The adaptation job selection processes to Generation Z

The management and organization have to adapt their practices to each generation that makes up the workforce (Kupperschmidt, 2000). This suggests that organizations need to be aware of the unique characteristics and preferences of each generation in order to effectively attract, retain, and manage them. Moreover, each generation has to be managed and integrated into an organization in a different way. This indicates that a one-size-fits-all approach to job selection and management is not effective, and that organizations need to tailor their practices to the specific needs and preferences of each generation (Benson & Brown, 2011).

As Gen Zers are only beginning to enter the work market, organizations still have to adapt to their working preferences in order to efficiently recruit and retain these new employees (Maioli, 2017). It has been found that organizations tend to fail at retaining Gen Z talents because of the gap between Gen Zers' work expectations and what these companies offer (Maioli, 2017). Gen Zers are not only looking for good salary to achieve economic security, as was the case for previous generations, but also a clear career plan and mentoring within a feedback-friendly environment. These are the three key needs of Gen Z when choosing a job (Maioli, 2017; Mărginean, 2021). Moreover, when it comes to choosing their jobs, Gen Zers value job security and financial stability, Gen Zers choose jobs in line with their passions (Mărginean, 2021).

When applying for a job, Gen Z individuals expect a quick and transparent process. They also value integrity and social responsibility from the beginning. This suggests that organizations need to ensure that their job selection processes are efficient, transparent, and aligned with Gen Zers' values to attract and retain them (Koleva, 2023).

Among other things, companies that hire or will hire millennials or Gen Zers have to implement job satisfaction and work-life balance policies (Waworuntu, Kainde & Mangadi, 2022). Additionally, to motivate and leverage Gen Z workers, the traditional workplace model

and HR practices have to be completely changed to adapt to their preferences (Aggarwal, Sadhna, Gupta, Mittal & Rastogi, 2022). It has been found that flexible work practices, reward and recognition systems, compensation and benefits systems, feedback environment, and volunteering work opportunities are human resources practices that foster Gen Zers' job satisfaction and work performance (Aggarwal, Sadhna, Gupta, Mittal & Rastogi, 2022).

As Gen Zers are looking for working hours flexibility, employers that offer this kind of arrangement would appear more attractive to them (White, 2019). This suggests that offering flexible work arrangements, such as a 4-day work week, may be an effective way to attract and retain Gen Z talent.

In conclusion, the existing literature suggests that to attract and retain Gen Z talent, organizations need to adapt their job selection processes to their preferences and expectations (Koleva, 2023; Waworuntu et al., 2022; Aggarwal et al., 2022; White, 2019). This may involve offering a quick and transparent job application process, prioritizing job satisfaction and work-life balance, implementing flexible work arrangements, and providing opportunities for personal and professional development. These insights provide a valuable foundation for further exploration of the potential influence of a 4-day work week on job selection among highly educated members of Generation Z.

## IV. RESULTS

The results of the survey and the interviews conducted reveal interesting results about the highly educated Generation Z individuals' perception on the 4-day work week and flexible working time arrangements, and about their preferences regarding different factors when choosing a job.

The present study will initially examine the preferences of highly educated Generation Z in terms of work characteristics. Subsequently, the impact of flexible working arrangements, and more specifically the 4-day work week, on job selection among this population will be investigated.

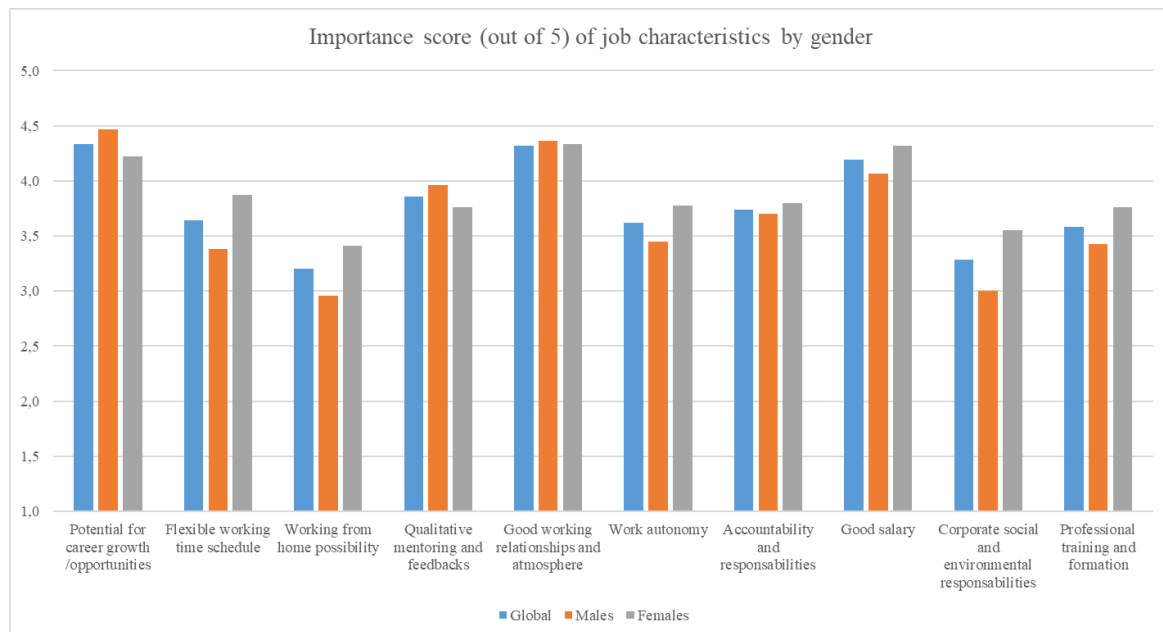
### *1. Generation Z preferences in terms of work characteristics*

The first goal of the questionnaire conducted was to assess the importance of different work characteristics for Generation Z individuals when it comes to selecting a job. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of some work characteristics on a scale including: 'Very important', 'Fairly Important', 'Important', 'Slightly important' and 'Not at all Important'. After associating each option to a score from 1 to 5, 5 being 'Very Important' and 1 being 'Not at all Important', the relative importance of the work characteristics can be compared (see Figure 1). It appears that a potential for career growth and opportunities, good working relationships and atmosphere, and a good salary are the three most valued job characteristics for highly educated Gen Z members, all presenting an importance score above 4 out of 5. The two characteristics regarding flexible working time arrangements, namely 'Flexible working time schedule' and 'Working from home possibility', are only respectively ranked 10<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, on average the highly educated Generation Z individuals do not value the common flexible working time arrangements among the most important characteristics when choosing a job.

	Potential for career growth /opportunities	Flexible working time schedule	Working from home possibility	Qualitative mentoring and feedbacks	Good working relationships and atmosphere	Work autonomy	Accountability and responsibilities	Good salary	Corporate social and environmental responsibilities	Professional training and formation
Importance score (out of 5)	4,33	3,64	3,20	3,85	4,32	3,62	3,74	4,19	3,28	3,58
Importance order	1st	6th	10th	4th	2nd	7th	5th	3rd	9th	8th

**Figure 2.** Importance score and Importance order of 10 work characteristics according to the audience of the questionnaire

When comparing the results obtained among males and among women (see Figure 3), only small differences are observed. The audience women tend to value more flexible working time schedules, working from home possibility, work autonomy, good salary, corporate social responsibilities, and professional training, while men value more potential for career growth and qualitative mentoring and feedback.



**Figure 3.** Importance score of 10 work characteristics, by gender

To have a deeper understanding of the Generation Z, which is a very complex group, dividing them into subgroups with different work values, behaviors and expectations appeared key to better assess the preferences of this generation regarding job selection. The classification

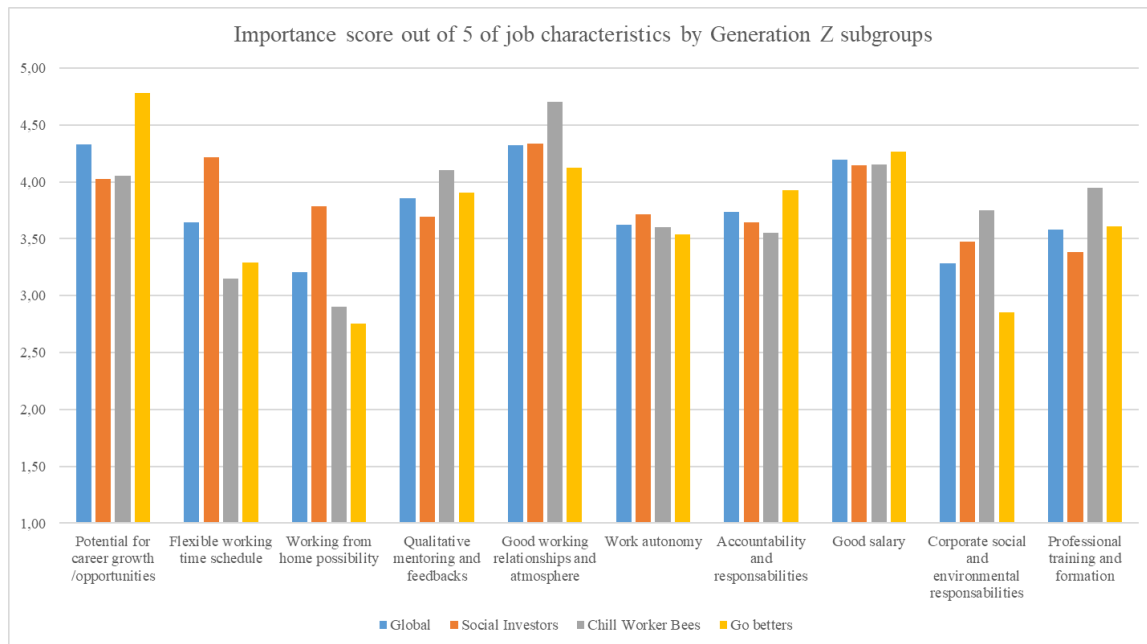
in three subgroups, the Social Investors, the Chill Worker Bees, and the Go Better, developed by Leslie & al. has been used. The Social Investors tend to value work-life balance more highly compared to the other subgroups. The Chill Worker Bees, on the other hand, expect a comfortable workplace environment talent. Finally, the Go Better are focused on their career evolution talent (Leslie, Anderson, Horman, Overly, Gentry, Callahan & King, 2021).

To this extent, the answers to the question asking to rank ‘Great work-life balance’, ‘Positive company culture and environment’, and ‘Career evolution opportunities’ by order of importance when searching for a job were used. The respondents ranking ‘Great work-life balance’ first were classified among the Social Investors, the ones ranking ‘Positive company culture and environment’ first were classified among the Chill Worker Bees, and the ones ranking ‘Career evolution opportunities’ first were classified among the Go Better. The repartition of the respondents in the three subgroups is presented in Figure 4.

Social Investors	Chill Worker bees	Go better	Total
42	20	41	103

**Figure 4.** Repartition of the respondents in three subgroups based on their work preferences

When segregating the results of the evaluation of the importance of some work characteristics by Generation Z subgroups, some clear variations appear (see figure 5). Compared to the other two subgroups, the Go better give more importance to the potential for career growth, which was expected, and less importance to corporate social and environmental responsibilities. The Chill Worker Bees give more importance to good working relationships and atmosphere, which confirms the definition of the subgroups, and professional training and feedback. The good salary importance score remains steady in the three subgroups, being among the top three criteria for every subgroup.



**Figure 5.** Importance score of 10 work characteristics, by work preferences subgroups

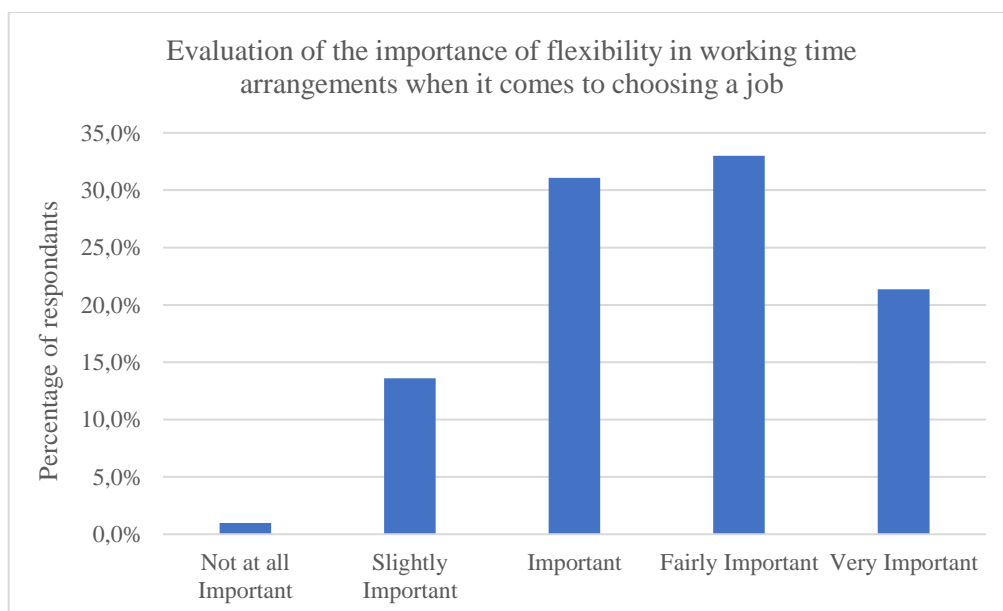
Regarding flexible working time arrangements, the results vary widely between work preferences subgroups. More specifically, the Social Investors gave ‘Flexible working time schedules’ and ‘Working from home possibility’ importance scores of 4,21 and 3,79, as compared to 3,15 and 2,90 for the Chill Worker Bees and 3,29 and 2,76 for the Go Betters. This highlights that proposing flexible working time arrangements in a job offer may be very appealing only to a certain subgroup of the highly educated Generation Z individuals.

In conclusion, the questionnaire revealed that highly educated Generation Z individuals prioritize potential for career growth, good working relationships, and a good salary when selecting a job. While flexible working time arrangements are not universally valued, they are significantly more important to the Social Investors subgroup. The Go Betters prioritize career growth, while the Chill Worker Bees value a positive work environment.

## 2. *The impact of flexible working time arrangements on Gen Zers' job selection*

### a. Flexible working time arrangements importance when choosing a job

The second objective of the survey was to evaluate the perceived significance of flexible working time arrangements in relation to the choice of employment among Generation Z individuals. As previously, the respondents had five different options regarding the importance of the item in question, which they were asked to rate on a scale from 'Very important' to 'Not at all Important' (see Figure 6). The results indicated a high level of importance placed on flexible working hours, with 85,4% of respondents considering this aspect to be "Important", "Fairly Important" and "Very Important". This represents a significant proportion of the respondents who selected these three options, suggesting that flexible working hours arrangements are a highly valued aspect of Gen Z.



**Figure 6.** *Evaluation of the importance of flexibility in working time arrangements when it comes to choosing a job*



To gain a deeper understanding of the significance of flexible working time arrangements, it is essential to consider the characteristics of the population in question.

A comparison of the results obtained among males and females revealed that females placed a greater importance on flexible working schedules arrangements (see Figure 7). On a scale of 1 to 5, the findings indicate that women consider this factor to be important, with a mean score of 3,89, in comparison with a mean score of 3,26 for men.

Population	Importance score (out of 5)
Global	3,60
Male	3,26
Female	3,89

**Figure 7.** *Evaluation of the importance of flexibility in working time arrangements, by gender*

Among the three Gen Z subgroups based on work preferences, namely the Social Investors, the Chill Worker Bees and the Go Better, the findings indicate that the Social Investors consider the working time schedule to be important, with a mean score of 4,10 (see Figure 8). This is in comparison to the Chill Worker Bees, with a mean score of 3,40 and the Go Better with a mean score of 3,20, who rated lower. This is perhaps to be expected, given the social investors' tendency to prioritize their work life balance, which is likely a key aspect for them.

Population	Importance score (out of 5)
Global	3,60
Social Investors	4,10
Chill Worker Bees	3,40
Go Better	3,20

**Figure 8.** *Evaluation of the importance of flexibility in working time arrangements, by work preferences subgroups*

Lastly, the working situation of the Gen Z respondents was found to have an impact on their views on flexible working time arrangements. On average, the Generation Z individuals who are working considered the importance of a flexible working arrangement to be 3,84, compared to 3,55 from those who are studying (see Figure 9). One possible explanation for this discrepancy could be the differing experiences of the two groups. Those who are working may already understand the reality of such arrangements, which is reflected in the higher average importance score.

Population	Importance score (out of 5)
Studying	3,55
Working	3,84
Total	3,60

**Figure 9.** *Evaluation of the importance of flexibility in working time arrangements, by working situation*

A range of potential flexible working schedule options was presented to respondents. Respondents were encouraged to identify one or more options that they found appealing. The options included part-time hours, flexible start times, remote work (i.e., working from home every day), working from home some days, a compressed working week, a 4-day work week and other. One respondent wrote "working from home morning and office afternoon" as their response. The respondents were provided with the following definitions for the 4-day work week and the compressed work week: "compressed working week refers to working the standard number of weekly working hours necessary to be considered working "full time equivalent" in only 4 days", and "4-day working week refers to working a reduced number of working hours necessary to be considered working "full time equivalent" (about 32h/week) without any pay cut".

A total of 253 responses were received from 103 respondents, indicating that respondents selected more than two answers. The two most appealing options were related to

working from home on certain days and flexible start and finish times, with 71,8% and 70,9% of respondents selecting these options, respectively (see Figure 10).

Of the options presented, the 4-day working week was the third most popular choice among the respondents, with 50,5% selecting this option. Among highly educated Gen Z individuals, the 4-day working week is a regarded option, however it remains less valued than popular flexible working time arrangements like flexible start and finish times (70,9% of mentions) and working from home some days (71,8% of mentions). The compressed working week, on the other hand, received less support, with only 26,2% selecting it as a valued choice (see Figure 10).

Flexible working option	Number of mentions	Share of respondents
Part-time hours	8	7,8%
Flexible start and finish times	73	70,9%
Remote work (working from home every day)	18	17,5%
Working from home some days	74	71,8%
Compressed working week	27	26,2%
4-day working week	52	50,5%
Other	1	1,0%

**Figure 10.** Identification of the most appealing flexible working time arrangements

Additionally, the respondents were asked to assess the importance that flexible working time arrangements have on their work-life balance, using the same scale as previously introduced ranging from ‘Not at all Important’ to ‘Very Important’. The impact of such arrangements is perceived as very high among the Gen Z individuals, as 98,1% of them consider it as ‘Important’ or more, with an importance score of 4,14 out of 5 (see Figure 11).

Importance	% of respondants
Not at all Important	0,0%
Slightly Important	1,9%
Important	20,4%
Fairly Important	39,8%
Very Important	37,9%

**Figure 11.** Evaluation of the importance of flexible working time arrangements on work-life balance

No remarkable difference was observed between women and men, and between working and studying respondents. However, differences were noted between the three work preferences subgroups (see Figure 12). The Social Investors, who tend to value work-life balance more, believe that flexible working time arrangements have a higher impact on their work-life balance than the other subgroups.

Population	Importance score (out of 5)
Total	4,14
Social Investors	4,40
Chill Worker Bees	4,15
Go Better	3,85

**Figure 12.** Evaluation of the importance of flexible working time arrangements on work-life balance, by work preferences subgroups

In conclusion, the survey findings suggest that highly educated Generation Z individuals highly value flexible working time arrangements. Women and the Social Investors subgroup, who prioritize work-life balance, place greater importance on flexible working hours arrangements. The 4-day work week is a popular option, but less so than flexible start and finish

times and working from home on certain days. Flexible working arrangements are perceived to have a significant impact on work-life balance, with nearly all respondents considering them important. The Social Investors subgroup believes that these arrangements have a particularly high impact on their work-life balance.

## b. Perceived benefits and challenges of flexible working time arrangements

In this subpart, the answers to the open questions about the benefits and challenges of flexible working time arrangements will be analyzed. As a reminder, 103 respondents answered the survey, and to keep only significant insights, the challenges and benefits that received less than 5 mentions will not be considered in the following analysis.

First, the benefits of flexible working time arrangements are mainly seen as personal benefits. The improved work-life balance was the most mentioned benefit, with 42 mentions. More specifically, 28 respondents valued more flexibility to organize their days or weeks and better fit extra-professional activities and appointments. Moreover, 23 respondents highlighted the benefit of having more personal time to rest, take care of chores, or take on new activities. Regarding personal well-being, a reduction of stress was mentioned 9 times, while an improvement in well-being was mentioned 5 times.

Then, some benefits for the companies giving the possibility to their employees to have flexible working time arrangements were also mentioned. 21 respondents believed that such arrangements would improve their productivity at work, and 9 of them mentioned an improvement in the working environment, motivation and satisfaction at work. Additionally, 5 respondents highlighted an increase in work autonomy and responsibilities.

Conversely, the challenges of flexible working time arrangements are mainly seen as professional challenges or drawbacks. The main worry for the highly educated Gen Z audience is the employees not being able to have the same working output, to accomplish their objectives, and to be productive, with 32 mentions. Interestingly, most of the respondents who highlighted this issue does not worry about their own productivity, but about the other employees taking advantage of the working time arrangements. This is a clear lack of trust regarding the other

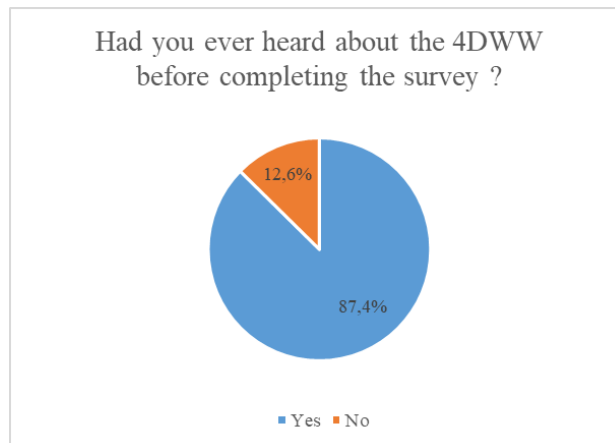
employees, and, as summed up by 5 respondents, the employees have to be trusted for the arrangements to be greatly introduced. The other major concern is the difficulties to adapt the working teams' organization and to coordinate them, with 25 mentions. Additionally, 5 respondents believe that such arrangements are not adapted to some industries and work environment demands, like customer services and shift works, while 6 other respondents pointed out potential difficulties in the acceptance of the change and difficulties to implement it properly. Difficulties for management to assess the employees' performance was also highlighted by 5 respondents.

On the personal side, the challenges identified were people isolating themselves and a lack of communication between colleagues (12 mentions), less motivation, concentration, and discipline (11 mentions), and extra work overload and pressure on some occasion (7 mentions).

To sum up, the benefits of flexible working time arrangements are primarily perceived as personal by the highly educated Gen Z individuals, with improved work-life balance being the most frequently mentioned advantage. Respondents also noted benefits for companies, such as increased productivity and improved working environment. However, challenges were also identified, primarily related to professional concerns such as decreased productivity and difficulties in coordinating teams. On the personal side, challenges included isolation, decreased motivation, and potential work overload. Trust in employees and proper implementation were highlighted as crucial for successful flexible working arrangements.

### *3. The appeal of the 4-day work week for highly educated Gen Z individuals*

The last objective of the survey was to investigate attitudes toward the 4-day working week. This topic is becoming increasingly known within the highly educated Generation Z individuals, with 87,4% of respondents indicating that they had heard about the 4-day working week before completing the questionnaire (see Figure 13), highlighting a high awareness of the 4-day work week among highly educated Generation Z respondents, and suggesting a growing interest in alternative working arrangements within this demographic.



**Figure 13.** Repartition of the answers to the question “Had you ever heard about the 4DWW before completing the survey?”

a. Influence of the possibility of a 4-day work week when selecting a job

To gain a comprehensive grasp of the significance of the 4-day work week (4DWW), one of the questions asked respondents to indicate if they would consider the possibility of the 4-day work week a factor when choosing their work position. Respondents were presented with three options: "Yes, a key factor," "Yes, a secondary factor," and "No" (see Figure 14). Consequently, 72,8% respondents consider that the 4-day work week would be considered a secondary factor. The findings indicate that among the three Gen Z subgroups based on work preferences, namely the Social Investors, the Chill Woker Bees and the Go Betters, most of the respondents consider the 4-day work week to be a secondary factor. Specifically, 64,3%, 70,0% and 82,6% of the respondents in each subgroup, respectively (see Figure 14).

	Global	Social Investors	Chill Worker Bees	Go Betters
Yes, a key factor	17,5%	26,2%	10,0%	12,2%
Yes, a secondary factor	72,8%	64,3%	70,0%	82,9%
No	9,7%	9,5%	20,0%	4,9%

**Figure 14.** *Repartition of the answers to the question “Would you consider the possibility of a 4DWW a factor when choosing a job?”, by work preferences subgroups*

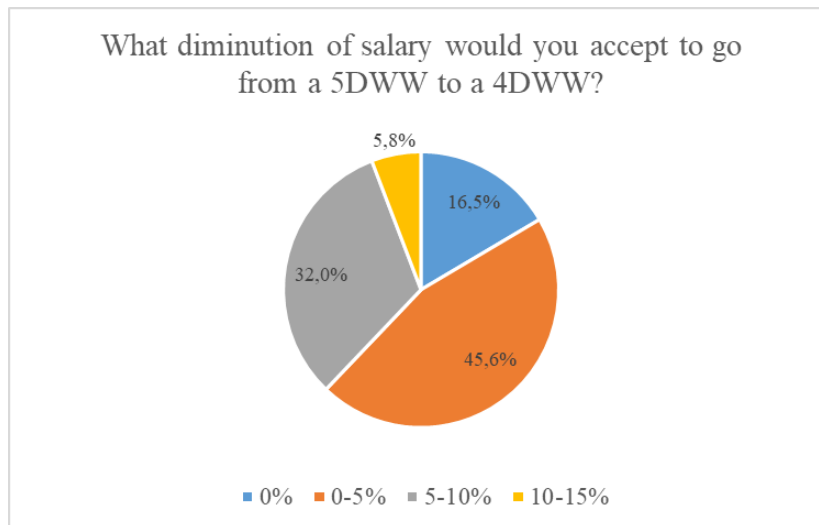
A 4-day work week confers the benefit of an additional day off per week, which may be spent on any number of activities. Several suggestions were put forth, including meeting with friends, family, engaging in sporting activities, studying or improving personal skills or interests, pursuing a new hobby, volunteering, going on outdoor activities, studying or improving skills related to jobs, or taking on additional work elsewhere. A total of 452 responses were received from 103 respondents indicating that the respondents selected more than 4 answers. The four most appealing options were meeting up with friends (74,8%), participating in fitness activities (72,8%), meeting up with family (70,9%) and engaging in other outdoor activities (63,1%). Conversely, we can observe that activities related to one's profession were less frequently selected. Among respondents, 27,2% chose activities designed to enhance skills related to their career, and 8,7% selected opportunities to work extra hours at a different location (see Figure 15). Consequently, there is a clear inclination towards personal pursuits in the context of an additional day off.



Activity	Number of mentions	Share of respondents
Meet up with friends	77	74,8%
Meet up with family	73	70,9%
Take part in sport or fitness activities	75	72,8%
Study or improve your skills for personal interest	44	42,7%
Study or improve your skills relating to your job or career	28	27,2%
Take up a new hobby	48	46,6%
Volunteering	33	32,0%
Go on other outdoor activities	65	63,1%
Take on extra work somewhere else	9	8,7%
Other	10	9,7%

**Figure 15.** *Identification of the activities that would be taken on if having an extra day off*

Finally, respondents were asked to evaluate the appeal of a 4-day work week, which would entail a reduction in salary to move from a 5DWW to a 4DWW. This would represent a reduction in working time of approximately 10%, with the extent of the reduction varying by country. Most of respondents indicated a willingness to accept a reduction in salary, with only 16,5% of respondents indicating a reduction of salary of 0%. Most of the respondents indicated a willingness to accept a lower salary, provided that the reduction in remuneration was less than the proportional reduction in working hours (see Figure 16).



**Figure 16.** Repartition of the answers to the question “What diminution of salary would you accept to go from a 5DWW to a 4DWW?”

The results of the study did not indicate any significant difference in salary reduction willingness when the data were segregated by gender or by work preferences subgroups. However, when the answers of respondents currently employed and those of respondents still studying were compared, it became evident that employed individuals were considerably less willing to accept a reduction in salary (see Figure 17). This could be attributed to the relative lack of knowledge about wages among students, who have often not been confronted with the importance of salary.

	Studying	Working
0%	16,7%	15,8%
0-5%	41,7%	63,2%
5-10%	34,5%	21,1%
10-15%	7,1%	0,0%

**Figure 17.** Repartition of the answers to the question “What diminution of salary would you accept to go from a 5DWW to a 4DWW?”, by working situation

To sum up, the findings suggest that while the 4-day work week is a desirable option for highly educated Gen Z individuals, as highlighted by their willingness to accept a reduction of salary to go to a 4DWW, it is not a primary factor in job selection.

#### b. Perceived Benefits and challenges of the 4-day work week

As for flexible working time arrangements, the audience was asked about the perceived benefits and challenges of the 4-day work week. This subpart presents the key insights regarding the respondents' opinion about having a 4DWW. As a reminder, 103 respondents answered the survey. To ensure the analysis is comprehensive, the challenges and benefits that received less than 5 mentions will not be considered in the following analysis.

Similarly to flexible working time arrangements, the benefits of having a 4DWW are mainly perceived as individual benefits by the highly educated Generation Z individuals. In total, 53 respondents cited having more personal time as a benefit, whether to rest, to take on other activities or to see family and friends. This extra personal time is linked to having a better work-life balance, as identified by 25 respondents. Furthermore, the 4DWW and the additional personal time are perceived as a means of improving well-being (7 mentions) and mental health (7 mentions). It is noteworthy that the audience places a high value on having an extra day off, with 27 mentions, with the majority emphasizing the benefit of having a 3-day weekend.

Regarding the perceived benefits for the company, only a few were identified. Notably, an improvement in satisfaction and motivation at work was mentioned 7 times.

It is noteworthy that the impact of 4DWW on productivity was mentioned in both the benefits and challenges sections. While 9 respondents indicated that it would result in a decrease in productivity, 21 others asserted that it would lead to enhanced productivity at work, particularly due to a reduction in idle time. These disparate opinions reflect the uncertainties that emerged during the literature review regarding the impact of the 4DWW on employee productivity.

In the wake of concerns about declining productivity, 6 respondents identified potential financial costs and reduced financial performance for employers. Two key challenges were

identified by the audience. The primary challenge, with 31 respondents highlighting it, is the increased workload and difficulties in meeting the same work output in less time. The second challenge is the difficulties in implementing the 4DWW in existing companies, mentioned by 21 respondents. These difficulties are primarily associated with the management of deadlines, the attention to customers who have not yet implemented the 4DWW, the scheduling of tasks for the team, the coordination of activities between teams, and the reluctance of employees to embrace change. Furthermore, 5 respondents expressed concerns that companies may not be able to maintain the same salaries when transitioning from a 5DWW to a 4DWW.

In summary, the highly educated Generation Z individuals perceive the benefits of a 4-day work week primarily as individual benefits, including more personal time, improved work-life balance, and better well-being and mental health. A few benefits for companies were also identified, such as improved satisfaction and motivation at work. However, concerns about decreased productivity and increased workload were raised, as well as challenges in implementing the 4DWW in existing companies. The impact on productivity remains uncertain, with differing opinions among respondents. Financial costs and reduced performance for employers were also mentioned as potential challenges.

#### *4. Summary of the results*

First, when evaluating job offers highly educated Generation Z individuals tend to prioritize potential for career growth, good working relationships, and a good salary. Additionally, flexible work arrangements are not universally valued. The Social Investors subgroup, who prioritize work-life balance, place greater importance on flexible work options.

Then, a high proportion of respondents consider flexible working schedule arrangements to be important. Women and the Social Investors subgroup place a greater significance on flexible work schedules. Those currently working value flexible work arrangements more than students. While the 4-day work week is a popular option regarding appealing flexible working time arrangements, it is less considered than flexible start and finish

times and working from home on certain days. Flexible work arrangements are broadly seen as having a significant positive impact on work-life balance.

Additionally, there is a high level of awareness of the 4-day work week concept among Generation Z. While being considered as desirable, the 4DWW is not the primary influence on job selection. The additional day off offered by a 4DWW would be primarily used for personal pursuits (meeting friends and family, engaging in hobbies) rather than work-related activities. Most respondents are willing to accept a pay cut to transition to a 4DWW, with the majority preferring a reduction inferior to the proportional decrease in working hours. The perceived benefits of a 4DWW are primarily individualistic, including more personal time, an improved work-life balance, and better well-being. Some potential company benefits, such as increased employee satisfaction, have also been identified. However, concerns have been raised regarding decreased productivity, increased workload, and challenges with implementation.

The findings indicate that while a 4-day work week is a desirable option for highly educated Generation Z, it is not the primary factor influencing job selection. Work-life balance is a significant priority for this generation, and flexible working schedule arrangements are highly valued, particularly among certain subgroups, such as women and Social Investors.

## V. DISCUSSION

This thesis contributes to existing literature with another perspective on the 4-day work week (4DWW). While most of the previous research is focused on the implementation of this working time arrangements and on its benefits and drawbacks, the focus of this study is to determine the extent to which the possibility of adopting a 4DWW positively influences the job selection process among highly educated Generation Z members, which could help to clarify the aspirations of this generation regarding job characteristics and associated benefits and possibly enable companies to tailor their job offers to highly educated Generation Z individuals.

To achieve this, a quantitative analysis was conducted, focusing on identifying the target audience preferences in terms of job characteristics and assessing their perception on various flexible working schedule arrangements and more specifically on the 4-day work week. To establish a foundation for the study, a comprehensive review of existing literature was previously conducted. To complement the quantitative analysis, face-to-face interviews were conducted with some respondents to gain more qualitative insights about the 4-day work week and the job selection process.

### *1. Key findings and interpretations*

First, we found that the flexible working schedule arrangements, like flexible start and finish hours and working from home possibility, are far from being the most valued job characteristics for the highly educated Gen Z individuals looking for a job. Indeed, the interviews helped to better understand this result. The flexible working time arrangements may be considered as great additional benefits but are not a prerequisite. These arrangements are seen as a way to achieve a better work life balance; however, a great work life balance can be achieved without these arrangements.

The value perceived of flexible work arrangements is disparate among the audience of the survey. When using a classification of the Generation Z members into three subgroups, the

Go Betters, the Social Investors, and the Chill Worker Bees (Leslie, Anderson, Horman, Overly, Gentry, Callahan & King, 2021), it appears that the Social Investors value much more the flexible work schedule options than the two other subgroups. For this subgroup, which give more importance to work life balance, flexible working time arrangements are a must-have when looking for a job. This highlights that flexible working schedule may even be necessary to some highly educated Generation Z individuals, and they could reject a job offer based on the absence of such options. Also, these findings suggest that job offers with flexible working time arrangements, such as a 4-day work week, may be particularly appealing to the Social Investors subgroup of Generation Z. Further investigation into the appeal of these arrangements to each subgroup is warranted.

The perceived importance of flexible working time options appears to be very high. Especially, the survey results showcase that the respondents who are already working give, in average, more importance to flexible working schedule arrangements than those who are still studying. One possible explanation for this discrepancy could be the differing experiences of the two groups. Those who are working may already understand the reality of such arrangements, which is reflected in the higher average importance score.

Regarding the various flexible working time options, the study found that the 4-day work week is not the privilege option of the highly educated Gen Z individuals. Working from home some days and flexible start and finish times appeared to be both more appealing. Based on this result, it seems that the 4-day work week is not seen as the privilege way to achieve a better work-life balance. This result should be mitigated by the fact that the 4-day work week is still nowhere near as widespread as the other options, leading to participants being less likely to consider this option.

To be noted, more than 80% of the target audience had already heard about the concept of the 4-day work week before taking on the survey. This highlights a high awareness of the 4-day work week among highly educated Generation Z and suggests a growing interest in alternative work arrangements within this demographic.

Both the survey and the interview suggest that the 4-day work week is only considered a secondary factor, or even an add-on factor, when looking for a job. It is not a criterion that is

necessarily sought after by highly educated Generation Z individuals, but this possibility could tip the balance in the event of arbitration between two similar offers. Companies offering a 4-day work week could then have a slight edge when it comes to attracting and retaining talent, but it should add to the other benefits, not replace them.

However, the respondents seem keen to accept a minor salary reduction to go from a 5-day work week to a 4-day work week. This highlights that this arrangement would be considered by Generation Z if it were set up.

The benefits perceived of the 4-day work week, as the ones of the flexible working schedule arrangements, are mainly individual benefits, including more personal time to take on extra personal activities, and improved work-life balance. Therefore, the possibility of having a 4-day work week will be seen as beneficial for the highly educated Generation Z individuals. Additionally, the interviews and survey highlighted that the benefit of the 4-day work week relies on having an extra day-off. It seems to be even more valuable if this allows to have a 3-day weekend.

Finally, the challenges of the 4-day work week are mainly perceived as organizational challenges for the company. It seems that the Gen Z individuals still need to be convinced that the 4-day work week is viable in the long run. If they can be convinced, we could expect an increase in the attractiveness of this arrangement, and the 4-day work week could become more valuable to them when looking for a new job.

## *2. Implications*

The study has provided valuable insights into the appeal of the 4-day work week to the highly educated Generation Z individuals. As this generation tend to value work life balance, even if it varies between individuals, the 4-day work week would be an appealing arrangement to them. Giving the possibility to have a 4-day work week could help companies to better attract and retain highly educated Generation Z talent.



However, having the possibility of a 4-day work week is not essential to this population as of now. Nevertheless, companies facilitating flexible working schedule arrangements like flexible start and finish hours or working from home possibility will generally be preferred when looking for a job. Companies could therefore propose them if they want to increase their attraction and retention rate among Gen Z individuals.

Also, the target population still has doubts about the viability for the company of switching to a 4-day work week. If this viability is proved, it would be a safe bet that the attractiveness of this solution will increase even further, as the personal benefits perceived of the 4-day work week are very high. In this case, the demand for having a 4DWW could increase and companies offering it would gain attractiveness.

### *3. Limitations and recommendations*

The study has provided valuable insights into how highly educated members of Generation Z see the 4-day work week. However, there are a few limitations to acknowledge, though, and these should be covered in later studies.

First off, this study's sample size was somewhat small. Stronger and more trustworthy conclusions could have been reached with a larger sample size. To improve the generalizability of the results, larger and more diverse samples should be sought after in future research. Second, it is critical to recognize any potential bias in the sample selection process. The findings may not be as representative as they could have been due to participant recruitment being influenced by the researcher's connections and background. To reduce the influence of researcher bias, future research should aim for more representative and diverse samples. Furthermore, not all pertinent factors that contribute to the appeal of the 4-day work week were investigated in this study due to time constraints. Future studies should think about incorporating more variables, like sociocultural aspects and academic and professional backgrounds, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the extent to which the possibility of adopting a 4-day work week positively influences the job selection process.

Several recommendations for future research can be made to address these limitations and advance the field. First, studies with larger and more diverse audience samples should be used in order to get more accurate results and eventually generalize the findings of the study. Additionally, qualitative data collection could be relevant to future studies, by conducting more face-to-face interviews or focus group interviews. On top of that, future studies could deep dive on the different subgroups to which the 4-day work week could be more valuable, or precise the preferences of the different subgroups in terms of flexible working schedule arrangements. Regarding the 4-day work week, research on how to effectively implement it from an organizational point of view is still lacking. By resolving these issues and following the suggested directions for additional studies, a more thorough comprehension of the influence of the possibility of having a 4-day work week on Generation Z job selection process and its underlying factors can be achieved. This, in turn, could encourage companies to offer their employees a 4-day work week to better attract and retain Gen Z talents.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of the possibility of having a 4-day work week on the job selection process of highly educated Generation Z individuals. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to inform the study. Subsequently, a quantitative and qualitative approach was employed, including a survey and face-to-face interviews. The analysis of the collected data yielded several findings.

**The research indicated that flexible working time arrangements, including the 4-day work week, are highly valued by highly educated Generation Z individuals.** This is primarily because it allows them to achieve a better work life balance, which is a priority for this population, to varying degrees according to subgroups. **However, it appears that the 4-day work week is currently viewed as an add-on rather than a necessary factor when choosing a job.**

Additionally, the relative attractiveness of the 4-day work week is explained by the high value it brings from a personal life perspective. This added value is based on having an extra day off per week. However, the audience identified a significant obstacle to the implementation of this system: the adaptation of the organization to the 4-day work week within the company.

Although the current study offers valuable insights into understanding the influence of the possibility of having a 4-day work week on the Gen Zers' job selection, it is not without limitations. A larger sample size would have enhanced the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the sample may have been subject to bias due to the researcher's background and connections, thereby limiting its representativeness. Moreover, not all relevant factors could be examined, suggesting the need for future research to explore additional variables that may complement the results of this study.

In order to validate and refine the results obtained, future investigations should aim for more representative and diverse samples. Additionally, future studies could focus on the implications of the possibility of having a 4-day work week on the job selection processes for

different subgroups to get a fuller picture of the impact this arrangement would have on talent attraction and retention.

In conclusion, this study aims to address a gap in existing literature about the 4-day work week by assessing its influence on the job selection process of highly educated Generation Z individuals. The findings may have practical implications for the actual implementation of the 4-day work week. If the appeal of this arrangement to the Generation Z could be confirmed and the challenges of its implementation could be overcome, companies may be keen to offer the possibility of having a 4-day work week in order to enhance their talent attraction and retention. By addressing the limitations and recommendations for future research, scholars can further advance our understanding of the 4-day work week and its implications for employees and companies.

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## VIII. APPENDIX: INTERVIEW SCRIPTS

### **First Interview:**

*The respondent is a French female, born in 1999, working with a master's degree in business and economics.*

***Interviewer:* What do you value most when looking for a job?**

*Respondent:* I value most growth career opportunities, but it should be in a good working environment, meaning that when choosing a job, I am looking for both aspects

***I:* What do you think about the concept of a 4-day work week?**

*R:* I think it is a good idea, in the sense of that you have an increase in flexibility and productivity. I think it would work, but the main difficulty is how you organize teamwork. For instance, I think the 4DWW should be the same for everyone, because if someone is working one day and another not, it could be stressful to catch up on work done during the day-off. If someone has not the same day-off, it would be a mess for the company and impact it negatively.

*R:* A benefit of the 4DWW could be an increase of productivity. I am scared that the team will be stressed when coming back from their extra-day off, which could lead to productivity decrease.

***I:* Have you ever worked for a company offering a 4-day work week? Do you know someone who have ever worked for a company offering a 4-day work week?**

*R:* No

***I:* Any company?**

*R:* No

***I:* To what extent would you value a 4-day work week when evaluating new job opportunities?**

*R:* It would be a secondary factor. To me it is important, but it would only be a plus. I value most flexible working hours and the possibility from working from home.

***I:* If given a choice between two similar job offers, one with a 4-day work week and the other with a traditional 5-day work week, which would you prefer and why?**

R: I would go to the company most appealing to me, regardless of the number of working days.

## **Second Interview:**

*The respondent is Spanish, born in 1999, studying a master's degree in engineering and technologies.*

**Interviewer: What do you value most when looking for a job?**

*Respondent:* So, I think that I would value two things the most. First of all, that the salary is competitive. Uh, maybe it's because I'm a young man and I wanna, you know, I am at a different point of my life, but I think the salary is pretty important for me. It has to be competitive with the industry standards and with the country that I'm living in. And the second thing that I will value the most is the work life balance. So basically, at this point, a lot of people is giving up a lot of their time just the to be able to work more. So, I have to look for a job that allows me to work and to actually be able to spend some time with my friends and go to the gym and also take care of my mental health so that those two things are the ones that have the most.

**I: And regarding work life balance, what do you think about the concept of a 4-day work week?**

*R:* So, for me personally, I think that it would be great as a worker. So, from the working standing point, I think that it would be very nice to have a an extra day off and be able to, you know, rest and come back and work as hard as I can the, the, the four days. But I think that from the company side is gonna be complicated to deal with that and having people work less, less days. But me as a worker, I would like it.

**I: OK, so why do you think it won't be beneficial for the company?**

*R:* So, I feel that the productivity, the overall productivity of the company will drop and that we know they'll need to hire more people to be able to complement that for those four days. So basically, a company spends a lot of money in salaries would need to spend even more and that would not be convenient for them. So, I think that would be complicated. Also, I think that depends on the sector and the activity that you do. But in most of the industries and most of the companies, I think that it will actually be complicated to do it. And also the people, the workers that work the four days, they'll have to profit as much as possible because at the end of the day, if you're losing one day, you're gonna have to do the same tasks that nowadays you're doing, but in four days, so maybe you'll need to be more focused or work harder, and I don't know if people are willing or be able to.

**I: Have you ever worked for a company offering a 4-day work week? Do you know someone who have ever worked for a company offering a 4-day work week?**

*R:* Uh, no. I think that in Spain is not pretty common and I don't know anyone Spanish who has done it.

***I:* To what extent would you value a 4-day work week when evaluating new job opportunities?**

*R:* I mean, for me it would be very valuable if the salary is stays the same and if it is actually true. So, because maybe what I'm concerned right now is that the amount of work that I'm gonna need to do, it's gonna be impossible for me to do it in those four days. So maybe I have to end up working extra hours in the four days or even in the days off, have to be working to be able to accomplish all my tasks. So that would be the thing that actually worries me: if I'm gonna be able to perform as I should just in four days, and if I'm actually able to fulfill it. But if it was true, and if it would actually work, but for the company, I mean I would value it a lot.

***I:* How would you compare it to other flexible working time arrangements, like flexible starting and finishing hours or working from home possibility? Do you value it more, less or equally?**

*R:* Umm, umm, that's a complicated question. Because we're talking now that it's either four days or, for example remote working or it would be possible to combine both?

***I:* I mean it will be possible to combine both. I was asking what you would value more between these two options. What would you seek in priority?**

*R:* Uh, so I think that the four days system is better because it gives you more free time and the actual time that you are working, you can be 100% focused on the work. So I think that for me, as a person who's able to focus and who's able to work for long time periods, the four day system will be better because I'll be 100% focus on my work and after that I'll have three days to relax and do my own stuff, and I don't know, maybe study something else or spend time with my family, go to the gym and all that, those things that I like.

### **Third Interview:**

*The respondent is a French and German male, born in 2000, studying a master's degree in engineering and technologies.*

**Interviewer: What do you value most when looking for a job?**

*Respondent:* I think what I value most is basically, umm, having a, well, if it can be a little informal. Umm, it could be good vibes within the company, which means that people should stick together or at least have sympathy to each other. There shouldn't be too strong hierarchy within the company so that we can feel comfortable speaking to anyone.

*R:* Also, when you're at a company and when you're working at a company, then I feel that you should have enough freedom to do the task you've been assigned to in a way you want to do like.

*R:* Something else is being valued for uh, yeah, that you won't be discriminated against for any particular reasons. I'm not the population that's pending discriminated against, but I feel that it's something that is still important to me.

*R:* Umm yeah. Do you want me to elaborate on any of those?

**I: No, that sounds clear.**

**I: And what do you think about the concept of a 4-day work week, especially related to these factors that you were looking for?**

*R:* So, for me, a four-day week is interesting and something that can be done in the company because I feel that there would be a better work life, balance and general.

*R:* So also, just to be clear, the four-day week is not a week in four days, it is a four-day week, right?

**I: The concept of a four-day work week is reducing the number of hours you have to perform in the week by 1/5 in order to be considered and full week.**

*R:* Exactly.

**I: So, it's not a compressed work week, which would be the same number of hours done in four days.**

*R:* Yes, exactly. So I fully support four-day week in the sense that it's reduced by 1/5 because yeah, I said better work life balance. I think as well that at the end of the week, people are most tired, so I can

say it by experience on Fridays it was harder to concentrate because every other day of the week I came home and I was, yeah, completely tired. And although I worked, I would say only like 8 hours a day. I mean, it's not necessarily efficient work, but at least like I was eight hours a day in the office.

*R:* Also, I feel that people would be less stressed out. So, colleagues of mine were less stressed out by doing four days a week and many other colleagues were envying them as well. People, colleagues that have worked there and although in the company I was working for asked to do a four-day week. So there was a reduced salary as well. I feel that many people did. The ones that did four-day week completely accepted it, and I think that it is for me also completely OK if there is a reduced salary for the four-day week.

***I:* Umm, just to know, the reduction of salary was proportional to the reduction of the number of hours?**

*R:* I think so. So, I think the base salary per hour was the same. So, it just because you work less, you have less salary. I'm not completely sure, but I do think that it's the same hourly wage.

***I:* OK, so and what do you think of the impact it could have on the company's productivity as a global entity?**

*R:* So again, I could base my answer on my experience, but also on what I've read and heard from other companies. So, what I read is that, I think, there was a study made in the UK at some point and the impact of that four-day week and people there said that there was no significant or not at all reduction of productivity, and nor any with reduction in the, I would say in work in that in general. So, like that, people did work more efficiently. So, I think that in a way the company could benefit from that because people like there would be also less sick from being anxious or stressed out. So, I do think that companies could and other companies in France as well have tried it out and are doing it at the moment. I think LDLC is doing it; I'm not sure.

*R:* And so, yeah, in general, I think the company could benefit from the four-day week because of, yeah, less people sick more likely still as efficient as before.

***I:* And from a personal point of view to what extent would you value a 4-day work week when evaluating new job opportunities?**

*R:* To what extent?

***I:* Would it be a key factor? Or would it be more a secondary factor? What would you value more or less?**

R: Well, I definitely think that the key, the most important factor would be for me flexible hours. But I mean, in general the key factor for me is just an ability in general. So that's the main driver for me. And then if the company has all these benefits, it is an additional plus. I think that between two companies that offer similar job, but the one is offering four-day week, I would choose the four-day week one over the other one because that's a benefit that is very good. So, I wouldn't say it is a veto if there's no possibility.

## **Fourth Interview:**

*The respondent is an Irish female, born in 2000, studying a bachelor's degree in business and economics.*

**Interviewer: What do you value most when looking for a job?**

*Respondent:* Umm can I think about it?

**I: Yeah, sure.**

*R:* Oh yeah. Probably like something that I'm actually. Like a company that I'm actually interested in, the work that they're doing and like tasks that I find interesting. Like I like the idea of things changing and not always being the exact same every day. And then obviously I'm interested in like the pay being like sort of like above average rather than just like sort of like borderline acceptable. And then I really like the idea of reduced hours also.

**I: OK, so, to be clear, the content of the work is more important to you than the other characteristics, like, I don't know, the working hours, the team you're working with?**

*R:* I guess like working hours and team is important in terms of like personal life and, but then like I guess the pay and the types of tasks are more like relevant to like actually working.

**I: OK, fine. And what do you think about the concept of a 4-day work week?**

*R:* Yeah, I really like it. I'm doing it at the minute already and I feel like, like so I did like nine months of five days and then I'm doing 3 months of four days. So, like now that I'm in like these three months of like four days a week, I actually have time to do stuff like, I feel like I'm able to study a bit as well. I'm able to work and I feel like it's like a huge bit off my shoulders and I don't think that I could like balance the amount of things I wanna do with my life and with a 5-day working week and I would love a job that has 4-day working week again in the future for this very nice.

**I: And do you think this working time arrangements could have an impact on the overall company productivity?**

*R:* It depends on like the person. So, I think for me, like sometimes if I like even before, if I knew that I was like gonna be on holiday, I was like, I felt more pressure and I had to like, really look at my heads on to do my task. But sometimes, like more time means like less work is done.



*R:* I think for me, like the more pressurized I am, the more I get done, but I think that there's some people who, like, definitely their productivity is affected and like, especially if you're like, maybe like working like Monday to Thursday or something, then you're like sort of it's a long time where you're not working.

***I:* OK. And so you're currently working for days a week, right?**

*R:* Yeah.

***I:* And do you know other people that have this kind of arrangement? And, if it's the case, do you know what they think about it?**

*R:* Uh, I only know one other person and they're studying as well, so it's not like they do to enjoy their lives more. It's just like with their other responsibilities, they have to do it basically.

***I:* And then, to what extent would you value a 4-day work week when evaluating new job opportunities?**

*R:* Umm. I guess you have to also balance the fact that you're gonna be getting less pay, but uh, I don't know. Like I do like, see, like a big, like change and like a lot more freedom now that I have four days a week rather than five. So, it's definitely something I would take into consideration, but I would also be like considering like the location of the office and like, is it like accessible and the type of work I would be doing.

***I:* So, it won't be a need for you?**

*R:* Like something that would be nice but not essential.

***I:* OK. And how would you compare it in terms of priority to other flexible working time arrangements, for instance, like flexible start and finish hours or working from home possibility?**

*R:* Like do I think it's more important than working from home?

***I:* Yeah. Which of these arrangements would you value, and which would you value more?**

*R:* Umm, like right now. Like I guess I'm sure you know. Like OK, but basically like up till now we were able to work from home like whenever we wanted to, but now it's like 2 1/2 days a week you have to be in the office, and to be honest, like whenever we had five days a week that we could work from home like I didn't get utilize it. But I like to know that it's there like sometimes like I mean I think it's like once a month I don't go to the office this, but if I wake up and I like don't feel well or if I like feel tired like I like to know that I have the option to stay at home but I don't actually use it. So, like, definitely, 4-day working week is what I would want a lot more.

## **Fifth Interview:**

*The respondent is a German male, born in 1999, studying a master's degree in engineering and technologies.*

**Interviewer: What do you value most when looking for a job?**

*Respondent:* When I look for a job I value well, three factors. I would say for once and definitely a payment is the first one. The second one would be that I have the opportunity to work from everywhere, not for like 100%, but that I have the chance to do some remote working. And third would be definitely career development opportunities so that I have the potential to, umm, yeah, for trainings for certain skill developments within work.

**I: OK, so these three factors are prerequisites?**

*R:* Yeah.

**I: OK, and do you have other like bonus factors?**

*R:* Umm, let me think about that. So, you mean factors that come on top that I do value but that are not necessarily decisive at the beginning? Like add-ons?

**I: Yeah. Factors that are not mandatory for you to accept the job, but which are cool or convenient for you.**

*R:* Convenient factors that well adds to the overall experience would be, umm ...

*R:* Yes, some sort of bonus incentives so that I don't have fixed salaries or maybe like some variable salary. Flexible working hours would be nice. Additionally, a car would be sick.

*R:* What else? Umm. Like smart working hours. Maybe the chance to travel within work; that would be the fourth one.

**I: OK, nice. And switching subject, what do you think about the concept of a 4-day work week?**

*R:* A four-day work week, I think for me as a starter in the working world, it's, ... Well, I don't see the benefit right now. I think it will come to me for within the future, like when I have like worked for a couple of years. At the beginning I feel like I wanna learn as much as possible and four days would eliminate one additional day to learn new stuff, or to perform at the highest level.

R: However, I do see the benefits. For me it comes down to the factor of whether or not this four-day work week gets the same outcome as the five-day work week, and if that is so, then for sure, I would prefer to work four days a week.

**I: Do you think that, at the company level, the overall productivity and output would be the same if everyone would go from five to four day a week?**

R: Yeah, I think that would be the question that I that I would kind of center the implementation around. So, if we can make this work, ... so if we put out a trial towards four-day work week and the outcome is the same, then I would definitely implement it because it gives all the workers a better work life balance. However, it depends on the people, so I think for a lot of people that are very organized and know how to work well, I think you can make it work. But there are certain people and ways of working that I think, well, stand in the way of getting the same outcome and productivity. And I think it also depends on the type of work. For example, I think office jobs work in general could be done in four, but anything manufacturing wise or jobs that are require you quote unquote to work around the around the clock I don't know. Consulting or investment banking, probably the best examples towards it and there are feel like it's hard to implement it because you're required to be, uh on call or in the office at certain hours, which could reduce the overall outcome if you go from five to four days a week.

**I: OK, and, from a personal point of view, do you think you could make it work in four days?**

R: And I feel like I could. It also depends on the type of work, but I feel like due to background and studies, the organized way of working I do have learned over the course of the years. So, if the workload isn't extraordinarily high and getting the five-day work done in four days, it's definitely possible.

**I: OK, and regarding what you previously said, I assume that having a four-day work week won't be a criterion for your job selection. However, how would you compare the perceived value of this working time arrangement comparing it with more traditional flexible working time arrangements, like flexible start and finish hours or working from home possibility.**

R: Umm, I think the fact that I'm still well in my 20s and just starting out, that is why the four-day work week wouldn't be the decisive deciding factor when choosing a workplace or a company. Comparing it to a flexible working hours or remote work like other types, I would say those, at least at this period in time, are more beneficial towards what I'm looking for. I think especially flexible working hours gives you the freedom to kind of do additional activities throughout the week. Also, like from Monday through Friday for the four-day work week, I would get like either Monday or Friday off, like completely. But for example, activities such as going to the gym or doing sports, I think remote work and also flexible working hours include that better.

*R:* And however, I do see on the other hand, I do see the benefit of having three days of weekend quote unquote rather than two because you have like longer recovery time, which can definitely benefit you to get higher outcomes or higher performance out of you for the four days you're working.

***I:* And, so, last question. If given the choice between two similar job offers, one with a four-day work week and another one with a traditional five-day work week, which would you prefer?**

*R:* If everything the same, I would choose the four-day work week. And just because it's, yeah, if everything else is the same, then I definitely would choose the four-day work week because it's an added value in terms of I get more time off, I get more recovery time, I can do certain weekend trips to see more friends, families, etc. in the three days, rather than two. Therefore, yes, I would choose the four days.