

The Use of "The 4 Day Work Week" method in Algerian Companies: Case Study SPA Casbah Company

العمل أربعة أيام في الأسبوع" في المؤسسات الجزائرية: دراسة حالة مؤسسة القصبه

CHERFOUH Meriem, Laboratoire Permanan, Ecole des Hautes Etudes

Commerciales (EHEC Alger), ch.meriem@hotmail.fr

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Abstract: The relationship between private and professional life is more profound than a conciliation, indeed the well-being of one life will act on the other. Flexible working hours can be a major factor in reconciliation, hence the "4 Day Week" method .This involves working four days a week on the condition that employees receive 100% of the salary for 80% of the working time, but in exchange for a commitment to maintain 100% of the productivity objectives .

We conducted a study on the SPA Casbah Company, which was carried out in two stages: the first an interview guide with the HRD and the second a questionnaire addressed to the company's employees. We found that the method motivated the employees and increased their productivity.

Keyword: work-life balance; The 4-Day Week; productivity.

JEL classification code : L20, M12, M54

Résumé :La relation entre la vie privée et la vie professionnelle est plus profonde qu'une conciliation, en effet le bien-être d'une vie va agir sur l'autre. Les horaires aménagés peuvent représenter un facteur majeur dans la conciliation, d'où la méthode « The 4 Day Week ».

Il s'agit de travailler quatre jours par semaine à condition que les employés perçoivent 100 % du salaire pour 80 % du temps de travail, mais en échange d'un engagement à maintenir 100% des objectifs de productivité.

Nous avons effectué une étude sur l'entreprise SPA Casbah, qui s'est déroulée en deux étapes : la première un guide d'entretien avec la DRH et la deuxième un questionnaire adressé aux employés de l'entreprise. Nous avons constaté que la méthode a motivé les employés et a augmenté leur productivité.

Mots-clés : conciliation vie privée et vie professionnelle, The 4 dayweek, productivité.

Corresponding author: *CHERFOUH meriem,*

Email:ch.meriem@hotmail.fr

1. Introduction :

We all agree that the human resource is the heart of the company; it allows it to distinguish itself from its competitors thanks to the skills of its employees. Even if this resource was considered in the past as a source of costs and an element resistant to changes, today it is perceived as a source of value creation.

According to Peretti (2016), talking about "*human resources is not considering that people are resources, but that people have resources*", this justifies the obligation of companies to invest and focus on human resources, in order to develop what they have: knowledge, competence, performance, talent, etc., through different methods and strategies such as: motivation, training, career management, talent management, etc., with the aim of achieving the organizational and production objectives. However, in order for human resources to be productive, they need to be motivated and a pleasant work environment needs to be provided to promote their well-being at work. As a result, managers have started to pay more attention to the social climate and the link between employees' private life, their professional life and their work environment.

In addition, since the COVID pandemic, telecommuting has become a worldwide trend, including underdeveloped countries. This context has pushed managers to think about how to reinvent the way they work while increasing the work/life balance .
The current context requires companies to develop management models based on trust, autonomy and responsibility .

One hundred years ago, the work week was reduced from six days to five days. The reduction to four days represents a reduction in the workweek from 40 hours to 32 hours for the same pay, the same benefits, and similar production, called "The 4 Day Week". This could become the new norm on a global scale.

In this research, we will try to answer the following question:
What is the impact of adopting the "4 Day Week" method in a company ?

To answer this question, we formulated the following hypotheses :

- The 4 Day Week method contributes to a better work-life balance .
- Employees who achieve a better work-life balance are more motivated in their work .
- Motivated employees are more productive .

We have structured this research work in three main lines: the first will be devoted to the theoretical concepts related to the reconciliation of private and professional life, the second to the method "The 4 Day Week", and we will expose the experience of this method in the world and finally the third where we present the case of Algeria through our case study in the company Spa Casbah.

2. Work-Life Balance: A Theoretical Approach:

In the literature, different expressions are used to designate work-life balance, such as : *work-family conflict* (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985 ; Guérin, 1997 ; St Onge & al., 2002) *work-family* or *job-family balance* (Chrétien & Létourneau, 2010 ; Tremblay, 2009), *work-life balance* (Robbins, 2013), *work-family enrichment* (Génin, 2014)

Some writings (Camps, 2008 ; Guilbert & Lancry, 2009 ; Sanséau, 2009) distinguish between "*family*", which is concerned with family activities, with or without children, and "*personal life*", which depends on leisure activities carried out individually. Other authors (Belghiti-Mahut, 2015 ; Camps, 2008 ; Guilbert & Lancry, 2009), for their part, distinguish "*personal life*" from "*social life*", and explain the fact that personal life is the responsibility of the individual alone, whereas social life is the set of activities involving other people such as neighbors, friends, associations, etc.

Guilbert & Lancry, (2009) have done a study to explain the sphere of "private life", for them the latter includes personal and social activities, help to parents, time spent with the family, and associative activities. In other words, private life includes family life, social and associative life, and personal life. We use this definition in our research because we note that the term "private life" has a broader meaning.

Privacy and work are two time-consuming activities between which it is necessary to be able to arbitrate (Garner, Meda, & Senik, 2005), coexist, and make compatible .

Greenhaus & Beutell, (1985) define the problem of work-life balance as a kind of "inter-role conflict", where the demands of work and family roles can be incompatible. Indeed, involvement in one role may make involvement in the other difficult or burdensome, especially for women. Consequently, conflict arises, according to Frone & Rice, (1987), when the individual feels that the expectations and duties of his or her "family" role and those of his or her "work" role are contradictory or do not go in the same direction. As a result, conflict can have psychological and physical consequences, leading to tension and overflow situations.

Work-life balance is "*the fulfillment of work and family role expectations that are negotiated and shared between the individual and his or her work and family partners*" (Kilic, 2014 ; P92).

The relationship between private and professional life is deeper than a reconciliation, indeed the well-being of one life will positively affect the other (Closon, 2007), and vice versa. The two are inseparable and interdependent (Génin, 2014).

Flexible working hours can be a major factor in reconciliation, hence the method "The 4 day week".

3. “The 4 Day Work Week” method:

3. 1. The basic concepts of the method:

The 4 Day Week method consists of working four (04) days a week instead of five (5) days, knowing that the days are the same length and the employees receive their usual salary. It was founded by Andrew Barnes, manager of Perpetual Guardian ¹.

It is a dream model, because it allows the employee to blossom both in his professional and private life, reduces stress and motivates

¹ A major New Zealand-wide employer and the country's largest trust company, with over NZ\$200 billion (€108 billion) in assets 240 employees.

him more so that he gets involved during work to achieve the company's objectives, the goal of this method is productivity.

"The Four Day Week" is just one form of flexible working, its principles are crystallized by the 100:80:100 rule, whereby employees receive 100% of the salary for 80% of the working time, but in exchange for a commitment to maintain 100% of the productivity targets. Employees can only work 4 days as long as they meet the productivity targets agreed upon with their managers. The interest for employers is to pay for a certain level of productivity. (Andrew & Stephane , 2020).

We would like to point out that the basic idea is to give employees more free time to develop personal projects. It is not new and many forward-thinking companies used the same principal years ago. For example, the 3M Group values the initiatives of its researchers, allowing them to devote 15% of their time to personal projects. This is how 3M has developed a human-centered growth model and has continued to propose innovations that have been commercially successful. One of the most popular products was introduced in 1980: the Post-It², the result of a laboratory technician's initiative.

2.3. The experiences of the method in the world:

Following the success of the program launched at Perpetual Guardian in 2018, in New Zealand, many countries around the world are starting to take interest in this way of working, and are tempted to test it in some of their companies .

Andrew Barnes and Charlotte Lockhart have created a global foundation "the 4 Day Week Global Foundation" as a nonprofit that aims to fund research on 4 Day Week practices and the future of work

² In 1970, Art Fry, a 3M engineer who also leads choirs in his spare time, was looking for bookmarks for his songbook. He wanted bookmarks which would indicate the hymns of the day, would not damage his book, and resist these numerous manipulations. He spoke with a colleague at 3M, Spencer Silver, who had developed a glue that was strong enough to adhere two paper surfaces together, yet allow them to be peeled off at will, leaving no residual adhesive. Art Fry borrowed a sample of the glue from his colleague Spencer Silver and made his own samples of adhesive bookmarks. This small, self-adhesive note, a new medium for information, is called the Post-it Note.

and well-being at work. They are collaborating with researchers from the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford's Centre for Wellbeing Research and Boston College, to analyze what the future of work will look like and how employee well-being and company productivity can be included in the economic package for the 21st century. They have launched a global campaign, to give voice to all those who want to work less and help companies join this international pilot program.

In England, since June 1, 2022, more than 3,300 employees in 70 companies have begun working four days a week without a reduction in salary for six months. The challenge of this experiment will be to measure the impact of this organizational change on companies' productivity .

Juliet Schor, professor of sociology at Boston College and principal investigator of the pilot project, explains in a release, "*We will analyze how employees respond to an extra day off, in terms of stress and burnout, job and life satisfaction, health, sleep, energy use, travel and many other aspects of life*³ " .

According to Sam Smith, co-founder of Pressure Drop Brewery, adds in this sense: "*We want to be part of a progressive change in society. We want to contribute to environmental impact, mental wellness, children's education, all kinds of other improvements in society that can happen if there are changes in the way we work*⁴ " .

More autonomy and flexible work patterns, the telecommuting experience of the last two years of the pandemic has shown that it is possible .

Similar tests already exist in Spain, Iceland, Portugal, Belgium, the United States and Canada. In France, 5% of companies have adopted it,

³ <https://news.dayfr.com/international/711598.html>, vu le 16/06/2022 à 22H00

⁴ <https://www.4dayweek.com/news-posts/uk-four-day-week-pilot-begins>, vu le 16/06/2022 à 23H10

64% of employees are in favor of it, according to a study⁵ published in Forbes magazine ⁶. In the UAE, they have adopted the four and a half day week since January 2022.

4. The experience of the company SPA Casbah :

4-1. Presentation of the followed approach:

Although the four-day week is beginning to be popularized abroad, especially in Europe, it remains very little used, even unexplored in Algeria. The company SPA Casbah was tempted to test this method and this since September 29, 2021 .

The company SPA Casbah was established in 1998 under the device of employment assistance, specializing in food processing. The SME began with the production and marketing of vinegar, then it expanded its range of products over the years by sauces such as: vinaigrettes, mayonnaises, mustard, ketchup, Hrissa, ... etc.

Our research approach was articulated in two stages: a first qualitative stage and a second quantitative stage. In the first stage, we chose the interview as a tool of investigation, it was addressed to the Director of HR, Mrs. Dania ZIADI, of the company SPA Casbah, for the simple reason, she is the first responsible who analyzes and follows closely the behavior of employees before and after the application of the method. We opted for a semi-directive interview, which took place in March 2022(annex 1).

The second step was to confirm the results of our interview with the HRD. We chose the questionnaire as a means of investigation through which we questioned the company's employees to try to find out their opinion of this work method.

⁵ ADP, the pioneer and world leader in Human Resources solutions has conducted the "People at Work 2022: The Workforce View Survey". The survey was conducted among more than 32,924 employees in 17 countries, including nearly 2,000 in France.

⁶ Forbes is an American business magazine founded in 1917 by Bertie Charles Forbes. Its headquarters are located on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

4-2. Discussion and analysis of results

After our interview with the director of human resources of SPA Casbah who enlightened us and answered our questions, here are the results we get from the answers given:

- The company adopted this work method in order to motivate its employees more without spending money, the goal was to increase production while minimizing costs, so the employees had to double their efforts to achieve this goal, while remaining motivated and morally sound.
- The company does not have a strategy of remuneration traced beforehand, indeed the decision returns to the first person in charge, this one decides according to the financial capacity of the company. The health pandemic has affected Casbah Algeria, which has resulted in a minimization of production because of the unavailability of raw material, so there was no increase in salary and bonuses were blocked. Hence the need to find other means than financial to motivate employees .
- The repercussions of this method were very quickly noted, indeed the employees did not ask any more for the exit vouchers, nor the work stoppages and the requests for absences.
- This method allows employees to spend more time with their families, and to have an extra day to take care of private life concerns, for example: a medical consultation, administrative paperwork, cleaning, etc .
- This method showed that motivation is not only related to salary increases or bonuses, three weekend days was enough to motivate the employees, which helped to improve their productivity by becoming more efficient. The production department doubled the efforts with a more motivated and happy staff. We can give a concrete example of the impact of this method on productivity, the

table summarizes the quantity produced of mayonnaise of 5 kg in the day, before and after the application of the method:

Table N°1: comparison of the quantities of mayonnaise produced before and after the method for the same period of the year.

<i>Before the method</i>	
<i>Date</i>	<i>Quantities</i>
<i>11/02/2020</i>	<i>694</i>
<i>12/02/2020</i>	<i>776</i>
<i>16/02/2020</i>	<i>619</i>
<i>After the method</i>	
<i>Date</i>	<i>Quantities</i>
<i>15/02/2022</i>	<i>1653</i>
<i>17/02/2022</i>	<i>1305</i>
<i>20/02/2022</i>	<i>1269</i>

Source: elaborate by ourselves according to company data

From the table we can see that the quantity produced by the day was doubled or even almost tripled, we would like to point out that the number of employees was not the same, it was largely reduced due to the health crisis (according to the HRD). This means that thanks to this method the employees are motivated and therefore more involved, working in strength to achieve the company's objective and considering the day off as a reward for their efforts .

- We also note that the method has had a positive impact on the company's image and may even influence the Algerian job market in the future. Indeed, the company receives more and more phone calls and CVs from candidates who want to work for the company. The media is also interested, and wants to make reports on "The four day week" to divulge it and encourage managers to adopt it. Another positive impact has been noticed, it is the notoriety of the company

SPA Casbah and its visibility on social networks, in fact, since the company announced on its social networks the application of the method "The four day week", it has obtained the best reaction compared to other advertisements, which proves that the followers of the company approve this method of work.

In order to compare what the HRD says with what the employees really think, we questioned all the employees of the company, of which there were 29, in April 2022(annex 2). We retained 26 answers, i.e. more than 89% of the entire population. We obtained the following results for more than the majority of the respondents:

- 80,08% strongly agree that the method works well for them.
- 69,2% strongly agree that the method allows for a balance between private and professional life.
- 76,2% strongly agree that the method motivates them to work harder and double their efforts.
- 69,2% do not agree at all with the fact that taking advantage of the day of rest for extra work.
- 76,2% strongly agree that they are spending more time with their families since the implementation of the method.

All in all, employees are motivated and happy to have a third day off. The latter is not used for extra work, but rather to spend more time with their families and enjoy their private lives .

Thus we confirm our three initial hypotheses, namely: The 4 Day Week method contributes to a better work-life balance, therefore employees are more motivated to work which will make them more productive.

5. Conclusion :

The basic principle of the 4-day week method is not to consider the three days off as a long weekend, but rather a two-day weekend and a third day as a reward for the efforts made. The objective is to increase the productivity of the employees, they must be motivated with a good moral health while guaranteeing a good balance between private and professional life.

The Algerian experience remains very shy compared to other countries, nonetheless we were lucky enough to find the company Casbah which has been trying to test this method since September 2021.

We have shown through this research work the positive impact of this work method on the productivity and well-being of employees. In a nutshell, for the Casbah company, everyone is happy .

Why not test this working method in other Algerian companies, to see its consequences and draw conclusions in relation to the Algerian context, which could be different to those of other countries. It should be noted that the cultural factor is to be taken into consideration, because it has a lot of influence and impact on the mode and style of private and professional life from one country to the other.

Highlight the findings and to make relevant recommendationd.

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7. Annex :

Annex 1: Semi-directive interview guide

Annex 2: Questionnaire

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>The method suits me perfectly</i>					
<i>The method allows me to reconcile my private and professional life</i>					
<i>The method motivates me to work more</i>					
<i>Since its application I take advantage of the rest day for extra work</i>					
<i>Since its application I spend more time with my family</i>					