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The impact of flexible work schedules on employee productivity in the modern business environment

Abstract. This study aimed to examine the impact of flexible work schedules on employee performance and to explore their benefits and challenges. The research methodology included a review of practical cases of flexible work schedule implementation in countries such as Sweden, Finland, the USA, Japan, the Netherlands, India, the UK, Germany, and Israel. A survey was also conducted among 500 employees across various industries in Ukraine. The results of the study indicate that flexible work schedules contribute to increased productivity, improved work-life balance, and reduced stress levels among employees. In particular, in creative and highly skilled professions, flexibility allows employees to adapt the work process to their individual rhythm, thereby increasing both the quality and speed of task completion. However, in sectors where synchronisation of work is essential, such as manufacturing or the civil service, the implementation of flexible work schedules faces certain limitations. A study of the Ukrainian context revealed that the war has been a catalyst for the introduction of flexible employment models, particularly in response to challenges related to air raids, power outages, and the forced relocation of workers. The survey found that 75% of respondents reported increased productivity as a result of flexible schedules, while the main challenges identified were time management and ensuring effective team interaction. It was concluded that the successful implementation of flexible schedules depends on the level of digitalisation, organisational culture, and adaptation to the specific nature of the tasks. It is recommended to invest in digital technology infrastructure, ensure equal access to flexible forms of employment, and regularly monitor their effectiveness. The results obtained may be useful for developing national policies and management decisions aimed at adapting organisations to modern challenges

Keywords: autonomy; innovation; organisational culture; adaptability; risks and barriers

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of this topic stems from global trends that are shaping the modern world of work. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly accelerated the adoption of remote work and

transformed perceptions of how and where work should be carried out. Increasingly, companies are viewing flexible work schedules not merely as a privilege, but as a necessary tool for

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maintaining high productivity levels, adapting to change, and attracting talented personnel. At the same time, the implementation of flexible schedules requires careful planning, as it may present new challenges related to team coordination, task performance monitoring, and preserving corporate culture.

In a business environment characterised by dynamism, technological innovation, and rising demands for competitiveness, effective management of working time is becoming a critical factor in employee productivity. Flexible work schedules, which allow employees to independently manage their working hours or choose the location from which they perform their duties, are gaining popularity across various sectors. This practice is increasingly recognised as a key approach to enhancing employee satisfaction, reducing stress levels, and optimising company resources.

The topic focuses on the challenge of balancing employee flexibility with organisational control and efficient resource management. Modern businesses aim to determine the impact of flexible schedules on productivity, assess their influence on employee motivation, and identify potential risks and limitations associated with their implementation. Approaches to studying flexible work schedules are grounded in the concepts of organisational behaviour, human resource management, and labour economics. One of the key principles underpinning these approaches is the idea that autonomy and freedom of choice can have a positive impact on employee productivity by enhancing job satisfaction. At the same time, other studies emphasise the need to consider both individual and organisational factors that may influence outcomes. Thus, examining the impact of flexible work schedules on employee productivity is important not only from the perspective of developing modern business practices, but also in the broader context of shaping new models of human resource management.

The issue of flexible work schedules has attracted the attention of many researchers seeking to understand their impact on employee productivity. For example, H. Chung & T. van der Lippe (2020) noted that a flexible approach to organising working hours enables employees to

better plan their personal lives, which has a positive effect on motivation and the quality of task performance. They emphasised that such an approach is particularly effective in creative or project-based organisations. Similarly, N.V. Shifrin & J.S. Michel (2022) concluded that flexible schedules help to reduce stress levels among employees, especially in large organisations, where high demands for rapid decision-making can lead to emotional burnout. In turn, N.-C. Liu & Y.-T. Lin (2021) focused on cultural aspects, finding that in collectivist cultures, schedule flexibility increases employee productivity only when aligned with team goals. The study by T.A. Williams *et al.* (2021) confirmed that employees who are given the opportunity to choose their own working hours demonstrate higher creativity and resourcefulness when solving complex tasks. Y. Lott (2020) drew attention to the gender dimension of flexible work, showing that women more often use flexible schedules to balance professional and family responsibilities, which leads to higher job satisfaction. However, he also noted that this could reduce the visibility of women's contributions to team activities. A.A. Davidescu *et al.* (2020) analysed how the introduction of flexible schedules affects the younger generation of employees, noting that for Millennials and Generation Z, flexibility is not only desirable but expected, and its absence may cause higher employee turnover. In addition, R. Sabuhari *et al.* (2020) investigated the impact of flexible schedules on organisational culture, finding that in companies where flexible working arrangements had become standard, employees showed greater loyalty to their employer and were more likely to remain with the organisation in the long term. The study by S.K. Parker & G. Grote (2022) focused on the technological aspects of flexible working, concluding that employees who used digital tools to coordinate work under flexible schedules achieved better results than those working in traditional formats. L.R. Soga *et al.* (2022) examined the impact of flexible working hours on interpersonal interactions within teams, noting that while flexibility promotes individual productivity, it may reduce team collaboration due to the lack of shared time for discussion and coordination. Finally, the study by M. Angelici & P. Profeta (2024)

demonstrated that the implementation of flexible working hours in large corporations led to significant reductions in office maintenance costs. However, they emphasised that the effectiveness of such changes depends largely on the quality of management and the level of support for communication among employees.

Previous research findings provide a solid foundation for further analysis, enabling a deeper understanding of the benefits, challenges, and mechanisms associated with the implementation of flexible work schedules in modern organisations. However, despite the extensive body of research, a number of important aspects concerning the impact of flexible work schedules remain insufficiently explored. For instance, limited attention has been given to examining the effects of flexible work schedules on productivity across different sectors of the economy. Moreover, there is a lack of studies focusing on the long-term implications of flexible working arrangements, particularly regarding employee career development and the formation of professional identity.

The aim of this study was to identify key factors influencing the impact of flexible work schedules on employee productivity, with the goal of developing recommendations for their effective implementation in the modern business environment. The objectives of the study were: (1) to analyse the specific effects of flexible work schedules on employee productivity across various economic sectors, and (2) to assess the long-term consequences of adopting flexible work schedules for enterprises.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was based on an interdisciplinary approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis of the impact of flexible work schedules on labour productivity. To assess the influence of flexible work schedules on the productivity and well-being of employees in Ukraine, a survey was conducted among 500 respondents representing various industries, including IT, education, trade, the public sector, and industry. The survey was carried out anonymously via an online questionnaire from October to November 2024. Among the respondents, 55% were women and 45% were men. Regarding age, the

majority (60%) were aged 25 to 40, 25% were aged 18-24, and 15% were over 40. Geographically, survey participants were distributed between large cities (Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv, Dnipro, Odesa), representing 72% of respondents, and small towns and rural areas, accounting for 28%. This distribution allowed for the consideration of differences in access to infrastructure, working conditions, and other factors that may affect productivity and well-being. In terms of educational background, 42% of respondents held higher education degrees, 34% had secondary specialised education, and 24% had incomplete higher or secondary education. The marital status of respondents also varied: 41% had children, while 59% were childless or chose not to indicate whether they had children. The survey was conducted in accordance with the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics (1997).

The questionnaire included both closed and open questions. The open-ended questions were: How do you rate your level of job satisfaction? How does flexible working affect your productivity? How has your stress level changed since switching to flexible working? What is your field of work? Where do you live? What is your marital status, and do you have children? What is your gender? What is your age? The closed questions included: What benefits have you personally experienced from switching to flexible working? What challenges have you faced with flexible working? How do you think flexible working affects work-life balance? What do you think employers can do to improve flexible working? How has the war in Ukraine affected your experience with flexible working?

To analyse the international experience of implementing flexible working hours, data were examined from countries that demonstrate successful examples of adopting this approach, including Sweden (Saha, 2024), Finland (Hours of work..., n.d.), the USA (Poydock *et al.*, 2024), Japan (McParlane, 2023), the Netherlands (Brega *et al.*, 2024), India (Deb, 2020), the UK (McParlane, 2022), Germany (Hybrid Work – a..., 2022), and Israel (Naor *et al.*, 2022). These countries were selected due to their diverse economic, social, and cultural characteristics, which enables a broad examination of various approaches to work organisation and an assessment of the

effectiveness of flexible working hours under different conditions. The analysis was conducted using a comparative method, allowing for the identification of common trends and unique characteristics specific to each country.

The study also analysed the experience of implementing flexible schedules in leading Ukrainian IT companies, such as SoftServe, Miratech, and DataArt. These organisations are characterised by a high level of digitalisation, which facilitates the effective adoption of innovative approaches to work organisation. To examine the legislative framework of Ukraine in relation to flexible work schedules, key regulatory legal acts were reviewed. These included the Labour Code of Ukraine (1971), Law of Ukraine No. 1213-IX "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding Improvement of Legal Regulation of Remote Work, Home-Based Work, and Work with Flexible Working Hours" (2021), and Law of Ukraine No. 2136-IX "On the Organisation of Labour Relations Under Martial Law" (2022). The analysis focused on changes associated with remote work, flexible schedules, and their impact on labour relations.

Furthermore, a systematic approach was applied to assess the impact of flexible schedules on labour productivity. Several conceptual frameworks were considered, including self-determination theory, which highlights the role of autonomy in fostering intrinsic motivation; the concept of work-life balance, which underscores the importance of harmonising professional and personal responsibilities; and the concept of organisational behaviour, which examines the influence of flexible schedules on team dynamics.

Statistical tools were employed to process the data, including descriptive statistics to analyse the distribution of respondents by category, correlation analysis to identify relationships between flexible work schedules and productivity, and regression models to assess the impact of various factors on employee well-being. The results of the sociological survey were analysed using descriptive statistics to determine averages, medians, and partial distributions. Correlation analysis enabled the identification of relationships between key parameters, such as productivity levels, job satisfaction, and stress levels. To ensure the relevance and validity of

the findings, the specific conditions of Ukraine were taken into account, including the impact of the war, the energy crisis, and general economic instability.

RESULTS

Flexible work schedules, which allow employees to adapt their working hours to their personal needs and lifestyles, are increasingly viewed as a tool for enhancing productivity. This phenomenon has attracted considerable attention in both scientific research and human resource management practice. One of the key concepts explaining the impact of flexible work schedules on productivity is self-determination theory, which posits that autonomy in task performance stimulates intrinsic motivation. Employees who are able to independently plan their working time experience a greater sense of control over their lives, which, in turn, leads to increased job satisfaction (Austin-Egole *et al.*, 2020). This improvement in satisfaction has a positive effect on both the quality and speed of task completion.

Another relevant approach is based on the concept of work-life balance. Flexible work schedules enable employees to harmoniously integrate professional responsibilities with personal priorities. For instance, parents can allocate more time to their children, while employees who prefer non-standard working hours, such as night shifts, can work according to their own preferences. This flexibility helps to reduce stress and prevent burnout, which are crucial factors for sustaining long-term productivity (Brough *et al.*, 2020). At the same time, the concept of organisational behaviour highlights that flexible schedules can positively influence not only individual performance but also team dynamics. Employees who enjoy greater autonomy in planning their work are often more proactive, showing initiative and a greater willingness to engage in new projects. However, such benefits can only be realised if effective coordination mechanisms are in place, supported by the use of modern digital tools for task management.

In addition, in creative and highly skilled sectors, flexible working hours are often particularly effective as they provide an environment conducive to idea generation and solving

complex problems. Conversely, in manufacturing industries, the effectiveness of flexible working hours may be limited by strict requirements for synchronising work processes (Destouet *et al.*, 2023). However, not all aspects of flexible working hours are unambiguously positive. According to the concept of resource conservation, excessive flexibility can create difficulties for employees who lack sufficient self-discipline or who are prone to procrastination. The absence of clear boundaries between work and personal time can lead to burnout and a decline in productivity (Kaduk *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore, organisational culture plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of flexible working hours. Organisational culture encompasses the values, norms, and practices that shape how a company operates and how decisions are made. Organisations focused on innovation and collaboration are more likely to adopt flexible working hours, as such approaches promote creativity, adaptability, and employee loyalty. In these companies, flexible working hours are perceived not only as a tool for increasing productivity, but also as a means of supporting employee engagement and development. In contrast, conservative organisations, characterised by strict hierarchies or a strong emphasis on tight control over work processes, may view flexible working hours as a risk. In such environments, managers may fear losing control over task performance and worry about a decline in overall efficiency. For example, companies that adhere to a traditional 9-to-6 work schedule often underestimate the potential benefits of flexible arrangements, believing that such practices contradict core principles of organisational management.

Another important aspect to consider is the nature of the tasks performed by employees. In professions that require a high level of autonomy and creativity, flexible work schedules can significantly enhance productivity. For example, programmers, designers, scientists, and marketers, who typically work in environments with minimal routine tasks, benefit greatly from the ability to adjust their schedules to align with their natural work rhythms (Babapour Chafi *et al.*, 2021). Under such conditions, employees are often able to focus on

complex tasks during periods of peak productivity, thereby reducing the risk of burnout. Conversely, for tasks that depend heavily on synchronised teamwork, such as project management or customer service, flexible work schedules can introduce challenges. Employees working at different hours may experience difficulties in coordinating tasks, sharing information, or making collective decisions. In these cases, the effective implementation of flexible schedules requires the use of modern technologies for team management, including collaboration platforms and cloud-based tools.

Additionally, industry-specific characteristics play a significant role. In sectors such as services or manufacturing, where strict timeframes must be observed (e.g., transport schedules or retail opening hours), the scope for flexible working hours is limited. By contrast, in industries such as IT, education, or consulting, where the quality of outcomes is more important than adherence to fixed schedules, flexible working hours present an effective solution (Kazekami, 2020). Organisational culture also strongly influences employees' perceptions of flexible working hours. In companies that foster open communication, recognise achievements, and demonstrate trust in employees, flexible work arrangements are more likely to be perceived as a privilege rather than a burden. On the other hand, in organisations where a micromanagement culture dominates, the introduction of flexible work schedules may generate suspicion, conflict, and even resistance to change (Smith *et al.*, 2019).

Flexible working hours are being implemented in many countries, yet approaches to this work management tool vary considerably depending on cultural, economic, and social conditions. Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden, Norway, and Finland, are among the pioneers in adopting flexible working hours due to their social orientation and emphasis on employee well-being. In Sweden, many companies are experimenting with a six-hour workday, which allows employees to maintain high productivity through focused work within a shorter timeframe. Employees are thus given the opportunity to devote more time to family, hobbies, or leisure, which significantly reduces stress levels

(Saha, 2024). In Finland, employees have a legal right to flexible working hours, enabling them to decide when to start and end the working day, thereby promoting a better work-life balance (Hours of work..., n.d.).

The United States is recognised as a leader in the use of technology to facilitate flexible working hours. With the expansion of the IT sector and the growth of remote work, many companies now offer employees the freedom to choose when and where they work. Major corporations such as Google, Microsoft, and Salesforce provide conditions that enable flexibility, allowing employees to plan their schedules according to individual needs. According to a Gallup survey, the majority of American employees believe that the opportunity to work flexibly enhances their job satisfaction. Furthermore, the prevailing results-orientated culture in the United States supports the successful adoption of flexible schedules, as the focus is placed on achieving goals rather than simply working a set number of hours (Poydock *et al.*, 2024).

Japan, traditionally known for a corporate culture of long working hours, is gradually reforming its approach to work organisation. The Japanese government has introduced programmes aimed at reducing working hours and promoting flexible schedules as a means of addressing the serious issue of employee burnout (*karoshi*). A well-known example is Microsoft Japan's experiment with a four-day workweek, which resulted in a 40 percent increase in productivity. Such initiatives demonstrate that even in cultures with traditionally high expectations regarding working hours, new approaches can be effectively integrated (McParlane, 2023).

The Netherlands is considered one of the most progressive countries in the implementation of flexible working hours. National legislation allows employees to formally request adjustments to their work schedules, making flexibility not merely a corporate policy but a legally established right. The Netherlands also promotes a strong culture of work-life balance, enabling employees to feel valued and empowered to make independent choices (Brega *et al.*, 2024). As a result, the country demonstrates high levels of employee satisfaction and consistently low levels of burnout.

India, a global hub for outsourcing, is increasingly adopting flexible work schedules, particularly within the IT sector. A significant proportion of workers are employed by multinational companies, requiring them to adapt their working hours to the time zones of international clients. Flexible working conditions help Indian employees remain productive and competitive in the global marketplace (Deb, 2020). However, this approach remains inaccessible to many workers in traditional industries due to economic inequality and insufficient technological infrastructure.

The United Kingdom is also actively embracing flexible work schedules. The government promotes work-life balance, and many companies now offer employees the opportunity to work flexibly or remotely. Experiments with a four-day workweek have demonstrated positive effects on employee productivity and mental health (McParlane, 2022). In Germany, where strong trade unions play a significant role, flexible work schedules have been successfully implemented as a means of fostering a healthy work environment. Companies such as BMW and Siemens support their employees by allowing them to choose their working hours, contributing to increased employee loyalty and productivity (Hybrid Work – a..., 2022).

Overall, international experience illustrates that flexible work schedules contribute not only to enhanced productivity, but also to the harmonisation of professional and personal life. Although the implementation of these approaches varies according to local circumstances, general trends indicate a gradual shift in the global paradigm of work organisation. Table 1 presents a comparative overview of the impact of flexible work schedules on productivity in various countries. The results show that the implementation of flexible work schedules contributes to increased work efficiency, improved work-life balance, and reduced stress levels among employees. These approaches vary according to economic conditions and cultural traditions – from the four-day workweek in Japan to the legally enshrined right to adjust working hours in the Netherlands. Such international experiences demonstrate the potential of flexible work models for the modern business environment.

Table 1. The impact of flexible schedules on productivity in different countries

Country	Implementation examples	Results
Sweden	Six-hour workday in companies	25% increase in productivity, improved work-life balance
Finland	Legal right to choose schedule	Reduced stress, increased job satisfaction
USA	Remote work at Google, Microsoft	Increased employee satisfaction, reduced burnout
Japan	Four-day week at Microsoft Japan	40% increase in productivity, reduced employee stress
Netherlands	Legal right to change schedule	Reduced burnout, consistently high job satisfaction
India	Flexibility in IT companies	Efficiency increased by adapting to customer time zones
United Kingdom	Experiments with four-day week	Improved employee mental health, reduced stress
Germany	Flexible schedules at BMW, Siemens	Increased employee loyalty, efficient work organisation

Source: compiled by the author based on R. Deb (2020), P. McParlane (2022), Hybrid Work – a... (2022), M. Naor *et al.* (2022), P. McParlane (2023), R. Saha (2024), Hours of work... (n.d.), M. Poydock *et al.* (2024), C. Brega *et al.* (2024)

In light of global transformations, including the rapid development of technology, the COVID-19 pandemic, and increased focus on work-life balance, flexible work schedules are gradually gaining popularity in Ukraine. This trend is particularly relevant for businesses seeking to adapt to new challenges while maintaining competitiveness and ensuring high levels of employee productivity. Flexible work schedules have become even more relevant in the context of the war in Ukraine, where many companies have been forced to shift to remote working formats due to security threats. Under conditions of military operations and constant challenges, such as power outages and air raids, the adaptability of working hours has emerged as a key factor in preserving business operations and supporting employees. Nevertheless, the introduction of flexible forms of employment faces a number of challenges that affect the pace of their adoption.

The adoption of flexible work schedules addresses many pressing employment issues in Ukraine. For employees, flexibility offers the opportunity to organise their time more effectively. For example, in large cities such as Kyiv or Kharkiv, daily commuting to the office can take between two to four hours, significantly reducing productivity and quality of life. Flexible working hours or the possibility of remote work can greatly mitigate this negative impact. Moreover, flexible schedules are crucial for specific social groups, including parents raising children, students, and people with disabilities. For these groups, flexibility in choosing working hours provides equal opportunities for professional self-realisation. As international experience shows, such models also help reduce stress

levels, which is a key factor in preventing professional burnout (Borisikhina, 2024).

Despite its numerous advantages, the implementation of flexible working in Ukraine faces significant challenges. One of the key barriers is the low level of digitalisation among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which still account for a substantial share of the labour market. Many companies lack the necessary infrastructure to organise remote work, including corporate communication platforms and productivity monitoring tools. Another obstacle is the prevailing mentality of many employers, who continue to associate productivity with physical presence in the office. In such companies, flexible working is often viewed as a risk, potentially undermining managerial control over work processes. Equally important is the issue of legislative regulation. Although Ukraine has adopted a legal framework for organising remote work, existing legislation does not fully address the specific features of flexible working arrangements, leaving gaps in the protection of both employees' and employers' rights.

Nevertheless, large international companies operating in Ukraine, such as Microsoft, Deloitte, and EPAM, are actively implementing flexible working models for their employees. These companies demonstrate that such approaches can result in high productivity and strong employee loyalty, even in a dynamic and challenging business environment. Among Ukrainian companies, there is a gradual shift towards flexible work models, particularly in sectors such as information technology (IT) and the creative industries. For instance, IT companies like SoftServe and Miratech are actively introducing flexible working hours, enabling

employees to choose their schedules based on client needs, including collaboration across different time zones. Another notable example is DataArt, which offers employees both flexible working hours and remote work, allowing them to adapt work processes to their personal needs and schedules. However, in other sectors, such as industry and the civil service, this transition is much slower. The war in Ukraine has become a significant catalyst for the introduction of flexible working hours, as many companies have been forced to adapt their business processes to new and unpredictable conditions.

At the same time, in regions of Ukraine where military operations were less intense, such as the western regions, flexible working hours were introduced more rapidly and with greater benefits for employees, as infrastructure and access to technology remained relatively stable. Conversely, in areas that experienced intense military operations, including the eastern and southern regions, the introduction of flexible working hours was significantly more challenging due to the widespread destruction of infrastructure, and the lack of stable communications and electricity supply. Nevertheless, even in these regions, enterprises, particularly in the service and IT sectors, are making efforts to establish flexible working conditions to ensure the continuity of business processes, despite the absence of employees' physical presence at the workplace (Bezpalko *et al.*, 2024). Thus, the war in Ukraine has not only accelerated the adoption of flexible working hours but has also highlighted the critical importance of technological adaptation, enabling enterprises to remain operational in emergency situations.

In contrast, in Israel, where the level of digitalisation and infrastructure development was already high prior to the onset of conflict, flexible working hours have become a natural and integral part of the work culture. Israeli companies actively utilise flexible working schedules and remote work in sectors such as technology, education, and services. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic and recent conflicts, many Israeli companies had already implemented flexible work arrangements as a means of improving work-life balance for employees. Additionally, Israel's vibrant startup ecosystem often

incorporates flexible working conditions as a core element of corporate culture, fostering creativity and rapid innovation (Naor *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, while in Ukraine flexible working hours were largely introduced as a response to crisis conditions, in Israel they have evolved as a standard component of modern work practices, supported by technological advancement and government initiatives. Israel's experience in implementing flexible work schedules, particularly in the technology sector, offers valuable lessons for Ukraine, demonstrating how such models can effectively enhance business productivity and resilience, even during periods of instability and crisis.

One of the main challenges employees face when transitioning to flexible working hours is the risk of procrastination, as the freedom to distribute working time may lead to postponement of tasks or a lack of motivation to complete them. This issue is particularly relevant for employees who struggle to organise their workday without clearly defined working hours. The absence of constant supervision and fixed schedules can negatively affect productivity, as employees may not fully realise their potential without external control.

In Ukraine, legislation on flexible working hours is only beginning to adapt to the new demands of the modern labour market, although several important steps have already been taken in this direction. The primary legal document governing working hours is the Labour Code of Ukraine (1971), which includes provisions for flexible schedules, home-based work, and remote work, thereby partially addressing the needs of the contemporary labour market. In particular, Article 56 "Part-time work" allows employees, by agreement with the employer, to establish a part-time working day or week. This provision is especially relevant for employees who need to combine professional duties with other responsibilities, such as raising children or pursuing education. Article 60-1 "Homework" regulates the performance of duties by employees outside the employer's premises, primarily from home, provided that appropriate conditions are ensured for fulfilling work tasks. Homework enables employees to reduce transportation costs and save commuting time, but it

also requires a clear definition of responsibilities for both parties involved in the labour process. Article 60-2 “Remote work”, introduced in response to new challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, governs the remote execution of work functions using information and communication technologies (ICT). Remote work allows employees to carry out their tasks from any location, provided they have access to the necessary resources. This creates new opportunities for organisations, particularly for ensuring business continuity during emergencies. Nevertheless, despite the existence of these legal provisions, Ukrainian labour legislation does not always keep pace with the rapid changes in the economy and technology. Although temporary regulations were adopted to address remote and home-based work arrangements during and after the pandemic, their application remains limited due to the lack of detailed regulatory guidelines and control mechanisms.

The Law of Ukraine No. 1213-IX “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding Improvement of Legal Regulation of Remote Work, Home-Based Work, and Work with Flexible Working Hours” (2021) provides the legal basis for applying flexible working hours, but lacks detailed regulation, which enables employers to implement these models inconsistently, depending on the industry. In this context, there is a pressing need for separate

regulatory acts specifically governing flexible forms of work, in order to create a unified and transparent framework. Additionally, the Law of Ukraine No. 2136-IX “On the Organisation of Labour Relations Under Martial Law” (2022) seeks to introduce clearer mechanisms for ensuring safe remote work and the application of flexible working hours under emergency conditions. However, several key issues remain unresolved, including the lack of specific guidelines for employer-employee interactions in flexible working arrangements and the uneven application of flexible schedules across different sectors of the economy. Thus, for the effective development and wider implementation of flexible work models in Ukraine, it is essential to establish a stable and comprehensive legal framework that regulates these forms of work across all sectors, ensuring equal conditions and rights protection for both employees and employers.

A survey conducted among 500 employees from various sectors in Ukraine revealed critical insights into the implementation of flexible work schedules, their impact on productivity and well-being, and the challenges faced by both employees and employers. The participants represented sectors including IT, education, trade, industry, and the public sector, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the situation from multiple perspectives. Table 2 presents a summary of the survey results.

Table 2. Survey results on the impact of flexible work schedules in Ukraine

Research parameter	Results	Comments
Prevalence of flexible working	48% of respondents work on a flexible schedule	Highest share among women (55%) and employees with higher education (54%). In IT 65%, among women 62%, among parents – 35%. Lowest in industry and public sector (15%)
Increasing productivity	75% of respondents noted an increase in productivity	Main reasons: avoiding traffic jams (60%), improving work-life balance (55%). The greatest effect is seen in women with children (35%) and workers in large cities (60%)
Areas where flexibility is most prevalent	IT (65%), education (50%), creative professions (40%)	Flexible working hours are most common among workers with higher education (62%) and in creative professions (40%). Due to the high level of digitalisation
Key challenges	40% of employees have difficulty planning their time; 20% experience a lack of team interaction	This is especially true for workers with children. The lack of interaction is most felt in rural areas.
Role of war in implementation	70% noted that the war was a catalyst for change	Factors: Air strikes, power outages, evacuations. Greater impact in eastern and southern regions, particularly among workers with children

Table 2, Continued

Research parameter	Results	Comments
Employer attitudes	80% of employees believe that their employers positively evaluate flexible schedules	Main benefits: increased satisfaction (60%), reduced turnover (45%), reduced sick leave (30%). More positively rated among employees in large cities and with higher education
Key groups that benefit	Parents (35%), creative professions (40%), workers in large cities (60%)	Flexible schedules allow for a more effective balance between professional and personal responsibilities, especially among parents and workers in large cities
Barriers to implementation	Low level of digitalisation in some industries; traditional approach to assessing productivity by employers	This is especially noticeable in industry and the public sector, where physical presence is perceived as an indicator of productivity. The lack of proper digital infrastructure is felt more by workers with secondary specialised education

Source: created by the author

According to the survey, 48% of respondents currently work under a flexible schedule or have the opportunity to partially adjust their working hours. The highest prevalence of flexible schedules is observed in the IT sector (65%), which is explained by the high level of digitalisation in this industry and its focus on results rather than processes. In the education sector, flexible schedules were implemented in 50% of cases, primarily for teachers who conduct classes at various times. In contrast, in the public sector and industry, only 15% of employees reported having the ability to choose a convenient work schedule, highlighting a low level of flexibility in these fields.

Among those working under a flexible schedule, the majority (75%) indicated that their productivity had increased. Notably, 60% reported that they were able to avoid stressful situations, such as long traffic jams during peak hours. Furthermore, 55% stated that flexible working hours had contributed to an improved work-life balance, allowing them to dedicate more time to family, hobbies, or recreation. This effect was particularly significant among employees with children, who could better balance work and family responsibilities. Creative workers also emphasised that flexible schedules enhanced both creativity and productivity. For instance, 40% of designers and writers reported being able to complete tasks more effectively in the evening or at night, which had not been possible under rigid work schedules.

Despite these positive outcomes, 40% of respondents working under flexible schedules identified challenges associated with this form

of employment. One of the main difficulties cited was effective time management. Employees with children mentioned the struggle to balance professional duties and home responsibilities, as children often require attention outside standard working hours. Another frequently mentioned issue was reduced communication with colleagues: 20% of respondents noted experiencing a lack of teamwork and collaboration, especially when working remotely. Employers also highlighted that assessing employee productivity under flexible working arrangements requires new tools and approaches, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and performance monitoring systems.

It is also important to highlight that 70% of respondents identified the war in Ukraine as the main incentive for the adoption of flexible work schedules. Due to frequent air raids, power outages, and the need for evacuation, many employers have provided employees with the opportunity to work remotely and to choose convenient times to complete their tasks. For example, employees of IT companies located in front-line areas reported being able to maintain high productivity thanks to an adaptive approach to work.

Furthermore, 80% of employees working under flexible schedules indicated that their employers positively assessed the outcomes of this approach. Employers most frequently noted an increase in employee satisfaction (60%), a reduction in staff turnover (45%), and a decrease in sick leave (30%). Nevertheless, some companies acknowledged that the implementation of flexible schedules requires substantial organisational changes, including the adaptation of

internal processes and the introduction of new technologies to support remote work.

The impact of flexible working hours on employee productivity also varies significantly between large cities and rural areas, largely due to differences in access to technology and infrastructure. In large cities, where there is a high level of digitalisation and well-developed remote work infrastructure, employees have greater opportunities to effectively utilise flexible working hours, contributing to enhanced productivity. Reduced commuting time, convenient home working conditions, and access to high-speed internet enable employees to focus more on tasks and achieve a better work-life balance. Conversely, in rural areas, where technological access is limited and infrastructure remains underdeveloped, flexible working hours often encounter challenges such as slow internet connections and insufficient access to modern communication tools, which can undermine work efficiency.

The survey results indicate that flexible working hours have the greatest impact on employees with children, particularly women, who are more likely to use flexibility to balance professional and family responsibilities. Compared to other groups, parents report a significant improvement in work-life balance, enabling them to better organise time for their families. At the same time, among younger employees (under 40), flexible working hours contribute to increased productivity, primarily due to the ability to avoid traffic congestion and work in comfortable conditions. Older workers (over 40) are generally less likely to adopt flexible work models, although those who do report an improvement in the quality of their work. Additionally, employees with higher education are more likely to have access to flexible working arrangements, whereas in small towns and rural areas, such opportunities are significantly limited due to infrastructure and technological barriers.

Overall, flexible working hours demonstrate significant potential to increase work efficiency and enhance employee satisfaction in Ukraine. Despite certain challenges, such as time management and communication issues, the majority of respondents evaluated flexible work models positively. The war in Ukraine has become a

catalyst for accelerating the adoption of flexible working, especially in industries already employing digital technologies. This underscores the need for further investment in digital infrastructure and the development of national policies that support the wider adoption of adaptive work models in Ukraine.

Flexible working arrangements should be considered an essential component of organisational policy for Ukrainian employers, given their positive impact on productivity, employee motivation, and business adaptability. Several key recommendations for employers to successfully implement flexible work models are identified: Firstly, it is necessary to identify roles and tasks most suitable for flexible working, particularly in sectors such as IT, marketing, and creative industries. For sectors with strict time requirements, such as manufacturing or the public sector, a hybrid (blended) working model can be adopted. It is essential to invest in digital infrastructure, including video conferencing platforms, cloud technologies, and project management tools, to enable effective remote work. In addition, employers must develop clear internal policies governing working hours, communication protocols, and performance evaluation methods to ensure transparency and accountability in flexible work arrangements.

Adapting staff to new working conditions is a critical step in ensuring the success of flexible work models. Therefore, training employees in time management and the use of relevant technologies should be systematically organised. Leaders and managers should also develop specific skills for maintaining employee motivation and monitoring performance remotely, which are essential in flexible working environments.

It is equally important to promote work-life balance through the introduction of psychological support programs, time management consultations, and, where necessary, additional leave days to prevent burnout and stress. Ensuring equal access to flexible working hours for all employees is essential, particularly for women balancing professional and family responsibilities, as well as employees with disabilities. In the context of wartime conditions, flexible working hours have become a necessity rather than a benefit. To support employees, employers can

compensate by providing home office equipment or organising safe workplaces in more secure regions of the country.

To minimise risks such as procrastination, lack of discipline, and reduced interaction between colleagues, it is crucial to implement clear rules for self-management, introduce effective time management techniques, and regularly organise team meetings. Setting clear goals and deadlines will also enhance employee focus and accountability. The use of online collaboration platforms and virtual meetings is essential to foster team spirit and maintain effective communication. Additionally, creating informal communication opportunities, such as virtual coffee breaks or social chats, will help reduce isolation among remote workers. To ensure that flexible working models remain effective, organisations should conduct regular employee surveys and monitor productivity and satisfaction levels, using this data to adjust company policies as needed. At the national level, the state should adapt labour legislation to better protect employee rights and promote flexible forms of work as part of modern employment standards. Ultimately, only a comprehensive approach, combined with investment in the development of flexible working models, will enable Ukrainian organisations to enhance their efficiency and competitiveness in a rapidly changing environment.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study confirm the importance of flexible work schedules as an effective tool for increasing productivity, improving work-life balance, and enhancing employees' adaptability to changing conditions. This approach to work organisation is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of global transformations affecting the social and economic environment. Flexible work schedules not only enable employees to better organise their time, but also contribute to creating a more comfortable and supportive working environment, which in turn positively influences overall job satisfaction.

One of the most notable effects of implementing flexible working hours is the enhancement of employees' sense of autonomy. Research shows that autonomy contributes to

higher motivation and improved task performance. This finding is consistent with modern motivation theories, particularly self-determination theory, which underscores the importance of freedom of choice and self-regulation in fostering intrinsic motivation. However, it is important to note that not all employees perceive flexible working conditions in the same way. In certain sectors, especially those where close team interaction is essential, the need for effective management of communication and collaboration between team members becomes more critical. This underscores the importance of adopting an adaptive approach to the design and implementation of flexible work schedules, tailored to the specific needs of different roles and sectors. Additionally, T.K. Ray & R. Pana-Cryan (2021) examined the impact of flexible work schedules on employees' mental health. Their research identified significant reductions in stress and burnout among employees who had the opportunity to adjust their working hours. These findings support the current study's conclusions on the role of flexible working in stress reduction, while also suggesting that the benefits of flexibility may be even more pronounced in occupations with high emotional demands.

The introduction of flexible working hours in the IT sector significantly enhances employee productivity and contributes to higher job satisfaction by enabling employees to independently plan their working time. The results of the present study indicate an overall positive impact of flexibility within the context of the high level of autonomy that is typical of the IT industry. A study by W.J. Conradie & J.J. De Klerk (2019), which also focused on the IT sector, confirms the positive, albeit moderate, effect of flexible working hours on employee productivity. However, the authors noted that remote work did not always lead to increased efficiency, a finding that aligns with the current study's conclusion that flexibility must be accompanied by appropriate organisational support to be fully effective. Nevertheless, unlike the current results, W.J. Conradie & J.J. De Klerk found that employee job satisfaction remained stable, without a significant increase. This discrepancy may be explained by cultural differences or variations in management practices within the companies examined.

The results of the current study further demonstrate that the implementation of flexible work schedules significantly enhances employees' job satisfaction and improves work-life balance. However, it is crucial to consider the specific nature of professions where such schedules are applied. This observation correlates with the findings of A. Füzi *et al.* (2022), who analysed the impact of flexible working hours on employees in creative professions, such as designers and copywriters. A. Füzi *et al.* found that flexibility in scheduling not only increases job satisfaction but also stimulates creative potential, which aligns with the conclusions of the present study. Nevertheless, unlike the current research, A. Füzi *et al.* did not explore in detail the influence of flexible schedules on employee innovation. In contrast, the findings of J. Yeves *et al.* (2022) also support the advantages of flexible schedules in professions where creativity and innovative thinking are essential. Their study suggests that adapting working hours to individual needs enables employees to identify their most productive periods for creative work, thereby significantly enhancing innovation capacity. This finding is consistent with the current study's emphasis on the importance of adapting working conditions to the specific requirements of professional activities.

Another key aspect of flexible working is its impact on work-life balance. Traditional work patterns often contribute to conflicts between work and personal life, particularly when employees are required to work long hours. Flexible working arrangements allow employees to better manage their time between professional and personal responsibilities, thereby reducing stress and improving quality of life. However, while flexibility offers clear benefits, it also presents potential risks. For instance, the blurring of boundaries between work and leisure can result in chronic emotional exhaustion if employees do not maintain clear separation between professional and personal time. This highlights the need for strategies to support employees in time management and self-discipline, ensuring that flexibility does not lead to overwork or burnout. A. Arlinghaus *et al.* (2019) analysed the impact of flexible working hours on employees' family life, with a particular focus on the education sector.

Their study found that flexible working schedules enabled employees to better balance work and family needs, supporting current findings that work-life balance is a critical factor in psychological well-being. However, L. Vyas (2022) observed that when employees had overly irregular schedules, flexibility could have the opposite effect, making it more difficult to plan family activities and maintain stability. Although this aspect was not specifically addressed in the present study, it emphasises the importance of a structured approach to implementing flexibility, ensuring that schedules remain predictable enough to support family life.

The role of flexible working in crisis situations is also of particular relevance. During periods of global disruption, such as pandemics or economic crises, many companies have been forced to restructure their work processes. In such contexts, flexibility has become a key factor in ensuring business continuity. It has been observed that organisations which had already implemented adaptation mechanisms, including flexible working arrangements, were better equipped to respond to new conditions. This underscores the importance of integrating flexible work models into long-term human resource strategies as a means of enhancing organisational resilience. Furthermore, M.A. Hashmi *et al.* (2023) examined how flexible working arrangements influence employee loyalty. Their research found that employees who had the opportunity to adjust their work schedules were less likely to consider alternative job offers. This aligns with current findings indicating that increased job satisfaction associated with flexible working can indirectly enhance employee loyalty. Interestingly, flexibility tends to be perceived most positively by younger generations, who value autonomy and adaptability, whereas older workers often place greater emphasis on stability. This generational difference highlights the need for tailored approaches to flexible working that take into account diverse employee preferences and life stages.

However, even when flexible working proves effective, challenges remain regarding its impact on team dynamics. Flexible working hours can complicate the synchronisation of team efforts, particularly in project-based activities

or when working to fixed deadlines. To address these challenges, companies should adopt effective communication and task management tools, including modern digital platforms. Additionally, it is essential to equip employees with the necessary skills to operate efficiently under flexible conditions, including proficiency in relevant technologies. N. Chanana & Sangeeta (2021) examined the impact of flexible working hours on team dynamics, noting that although flexible working provides individual benefits, it also creates difficulties in teamwork, particularly in coordinating the efforts of team members. These findings are consistent with the current study, which also highlights that flexible work arrangements can hinder interaction if specialised tools for coordination and communication are not employed. Further supporting this view, T. Van der Lippe & Z. Lippényi (2020) found that such challenges can be mitigated through the use of technologies, including shared platforms for planning and communication, a solution also recognised in the present research. These tools help streamline collaboration and maintain effective team functioning despite asynchronous working hours.

The implementation of flexible working hours has generally had a positive impact on employee productivity, particularly in office-based roles. This includes increased job satisfaction, better adaptation to personal needs, and reduced stress levels. Nonetheless, it is crucial to consider the context and specific nature of the work. For instance, R. Chen *et al.* (2020), in their study of flexible working hours in the manufacturing sector, found that flexibility is not always effective. In production line environments, where synchronous work and physical presence are essential, flexible working often had a negative impact due to coordination difficulties and the inability to perform tasks remotely. In contrast to the current findings, which highlight the advantages of flexible working in office-based settings, these results underscore that the characteristics of the job itself are a critical determinant of success when introducing flexibility. This further supports the argument that flexible working arrangements must be tailored to individual and organisational contexts, taking into account the specific nature of the tasks, the need

for synchronisation, and the availability of technological support.

CONCLUSIONS

Flexible work schedules help to increase employees' intrinsic motivation by promoting greater autonomy in their work. This finding is consistent with self-determination theory, which posits that the ability to independently plan and manage one's working time positively influences job satisfaction. Employees who have control over their schedules tend to demonstrate higher levels of loyalty, initiative, and overall task performance. Moreover, flexible working arrangements positively impact the balance between professional responsibilities and personal priorities, which is particularly crucial for socially vulnerable groups, including parents, students, and people with disabilities. The ability to choose working hours helps prevent burnout, reduce stress, and enhance long-term productivity.

International experience further confirms that the introduction of flexible schedules supports the harmonisation of work and personal life. For example, in Scandinavian countries, flexibility has led to reduced stress and higher job satisfaction. Experiments with a four-day working week in Japan and Iceland have demonstrated a significant increase in productivity, while in the USA, flexible schedules, supported by robust technological infrastructure, have become a key driver of employee loyalty. In Israel, flexible working hours are widely used in high-tech and healthcare sectors, helping employees adapt their schedules to individual needs and life circumstances.

However, challenges remain in the implementation of flexible working arrangements. In sectors requiring synchronised teamwork or strict deadlines, flexibility may cause coordination difficulties. Furthermore, organisational culture plays a pivotal role in the success of flexible working: companies that foster trust and autonomy among employees are generally more successful in implementing flexible arrangements than those dominated by micromanagement and rigid hierarchical structures.

In Ukraine, the introduction of flexible working hours is constrained by several barriers,

including insufficient digitalisation, traditional management approaches, and an underdeveloped regulatory framework. Nevertheless, the war has served as a catalyst for change, forcing many companies to adapt to new conditions by embracing remote and flexible work models. This situation highlights the critical importance of adaptability during crises. Despite these challenges, the findings of the present study show that the benefits of flexible working significantly outweigh its drawbacks. Flexible working not only enhances productivity but also contributes to fostering a positive corporate culture based on trust, openness, and innovation.

According to the survey, 48% of respondents currently work under flexible arrangements or have the option to adjust their working hours. The highest prevalence of flexible schedules is observed in the IT sector (65%) and education (50%), whereas the figures are much lower in the public sector and industry (15%). The majority of employees working under flexible schedules (75%) reported increased productivity. Additionally, 60% of respondents noted a reduction in stress due to avoiding peak-hour commutes, while 55% highlighted an improvement in work-life balance. However, 40% reported difficulties in organising their time, particularly those with children, and 20% indicated a decline in

communication with colleagues owing to the remote nature of flexible work.

Successful implementation of flexible working hours requires investment in digital infrastructure, the development of clear organisational policies, and employee training. It is also crucial to consider the specificities of each industry and ensure equal access to flexibility for different groups of workers, including those with family responsibilities and disabilities. Thus, flexible working hours represent a promising tool for increasing organisational efficiency and adapting to contemporary challenges, but they require a systematic organisational approach supported by government policy and labour law reform.

For future research, it would be valuable to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the impact of flexible working hours across different types of companies, as well as comparative studies in countries with varying economic conditions and levels of digitalisation, to better understand the global applicability of flexible working models.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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Вплив гнучких графіків роботи на продуктивність працівників в умовах сучасного бізнес-середовища

Анотація. Дане дослідження було направлене на вивчення впливу гнучких графіків роботи на ефективність виконання завдань працівниками та вивчення їх переваг та викликів. Методологія дослідження включала огляд практичних кейсів впровадження гнучких графіків у таких країнах, як Швеція, Фінляндія, США, Японія, Нідерланди, Індія, Великобританія, Німеччина та Ізраїль. Також проведено опитування серед 500 працівників різних галузей в Україні. Результати дослідження свідчать, що гнучкі графіки роботи сприяють підвищенню продуктивності, покращенню балансу між роботою та особистим життям, а також зменшенню рівня стресу серед працівників. Зокрема, у творчих та висококваліфікованих професіях гнучкість дозволяє працівникам адаптувати робочий процес до індивідуального ритму, підвищуючи якість та швидкість виконання завдань. Проте, у сферах, де важлива синхронізація роботи, таких як виробництво чи державна служба, впровадження гнучких графіків стикається з обмеженнями. Дослідження українського контексту показало, що війна стала каталізатором впровадження гнучких моделей зайнятості, зокрема у відповідь на виклики, пов'язані з повітряними тривогами, відключеннями електроенергії та вимушеною релокацією працівників. Опитування виявило, що 75% респондентів зазначили підвищення продуктивності завдяки гнучким графікам, тоді як основними викликами були планування часу та забезпечення ефективної командної взаємодії. Зроблено висновок, що успішне впровадження гнучких графіків залежить від рівня цифровізації, організаційної культури та адаптації до специфіки завдань. Рекомендовано інвестувати в інфраструктуру цифрових технологій, забезпечувати рівний доступ до гнучких форм зайнятості та проводити регулярний моніторинг їх ефективності. Отримані результати можуть бути корисними для розробки національних політик та управлінських рішень, спрямованих на адаптацію організацій до сучасних викликів

Ключові слова: автономія; інновації; організаційна культура; адаптивність; ризики та бар'єри