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Reduced working week - The impact on employee's stress and job satisfaction

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Master in Management

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BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Department of Marketing, Operations and General
Management

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Resumo

A adoção da Semana de Trabalho Reduzida tem sido amplamente investigada, sendo considerada um modelo de flexibilidade laboral com impactos no bem-estar dos trabalhadores e na produtividade das organizações. Este estudo qualitativo visa compreender as percepções de trabalhadores sobre essa modalidade, analisando as suas implicações no equilíbrio entre vida pessoal e profissional, satisfação laboral e níveis de stress.

Foram realizadas vinte entrevistas semiestruturadas com trabalhadores de diferentes áreas profissionais, utilizando uma análise temática com abordagem template. Os resultados indicam que a Semana de Trabalho Reduzida promoveu um melhor equilíbrio entre vida pessoal e profissional e aumentou a satisfação laboral, embora tenha gerado desafios relacionados com a intensificação do trabalho e a manutenção da produtividade. A maioria dos entrevistados reportou uma diminuição nos níveis de stress e maior flexibilidade para gerir compromissos pessoais. No entanto, algumas organizações enfrentaram dificuldades logísticas na adaptação ao novo modelo, exigindo ajustes nas práticas de gestão e comunicação. Este estudo oferece insights importantes para as organizações que consideram adotar semanas de trabalho reduzidas, sublinhando a necessidade de uma implementação flexível e cuidadosa, de modo a maximizar os benefícios sem comprometer a saúde mental dos colaboradores ou a eficiência organizacional.

Palavras-chave: Semana de Trabalho Reduzida, Bem-Estar, Satisfação no Trabalho, Stress, Equilíbrio Trabalho-Vida, Produtividade

Classificação JEL: J22 – Time Allocation and Labor Supply; I31 – General Welfare, Well-being; M54 – Labor Management; J81 – Working Conditions

Abstract

The adoption of the Reduced Work Week has been widely researched, being regarded as a flexible working model with significant impacts on employee well-being and organizational productivity. This qualitative study aims to understand employees' perceptions of this modality, analyzing its implications for work-life balance, job satisfaction, and stress levels.

Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees from various professional sectors, using a thematic analysis through a template approach. The results indicate that the Reduced Work Week improved work-life balance and increased job satisfaction, although it also posed challenges related to work intensification and maintaining productivity. Most interviewees reported a reduction in stress levels and greater flexibility in managing personal commitments. However, some organizations faced logistical difficulties in adapting to this new model, requiring adjustments in management and communication practices. This study provides valuable insights for organizations considering the adoption of reduced workweeks, highlighting the need for careful and flexible implementation to maximize the benefits without compromising employee mental health or organizational efficiency.

Keywords: Reduced Work Week, Well-being, Job Satisfaction, Stress, Work-Life Balance, Productivity

JEL Classification: J22 – Time Allocation and Labor Supply; I31 – General Welfare, Well-being; M54 – Labor Management; J81 – Working Conditions

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

FWA – Flexible Work Arrangement

RWW – Reduced Working Week

CWW – Compressed Work Week

WLB – Work-Life Balance

PPP – Portuguese Pilot Project

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Problem Formulation

The world of work has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, especially accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected Portugal in 2020. The composition of the workforce is changing, both because of the increase in 'dual-earner couples', who face challenges related to the conflict between work and family (Brown & Pitt-Catsoupes, 2016), and because of the digitalization of work processes, which has driven the adoption of flexible working models, such as remote working, in response to technological innovations (Ferdous et al., 2020; Kwon & Kim-Goh, 2023).

The need to adapt quickly to remote working during lockdowns has prompted a reassessment of traditional working practices, highlighting both the advantages and challenges associated with new models of work organization (Kwon & Kim-Goh, 2023). The pandemic has brought to light crucial questions about work flexibility, Work-Life Balance (WLB) and the importance of mental health in the workplace (Li & Wang, 2022; Mullens & Glorieux, 2024).

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA), which include various models such as remote work, flextime, Compressed Work Weeks (CWW), and the Reduced Working Week (RWW), have gained significant traction in recent years. Remote working, which was once an exception for many, has become common practice, redefining how organizations and employees manage productivity and time (Kwon & Kim-Goh, 2023). Among these FWAs, the RWW, which focuses on reducing weekly working hours without compromising productivity, has been tested across various regions and sectors. This shift has emerged in response to the growing demand for better WLB and the need to reduce stress and burnout among employees.

Remote working, which used to be an exception for many, has become common practice, redefining the way organizations and employees approach productivity and time management (Kwon & Kim-Goh, 2023). At the same time, there has been greater openness to implementing FWA, such as the RWW, which is based on reducing weekly working hours, aims to balance work productivity while enhancing leisure time and improving the WLB of employees (Veal, 2023). This model has been tested in various regions and sectors, mainly in response to the growing demand for a better WLB, as well as the need to minimize levels of stress and burnout among employees.

The RWW is considered a FWA, in which there is a reduction in the number of hours worked per week. An increasingly popular model of RWW is the four-day week, with an extra

day off and no reduction in pay (Campbell, 2024; Delaney & Casey, 2022). There is also the concept of the “nine-day week”, with an extra day off every two weeks (Veal, 2023).

Motivations for adopting RWW vary, with employees valuing the extra time for personal life and organizations seeking greater productivity and talent attraction, especially due to the benefits in terms of WLB (Hamermesh & Biddle, 2023). Studies such as those by Delaney and Casey (2022) in New Zealand show that this model has contributed to an improvement in WLB, as well as an increase in job satisfaction. However, the transition to this type of model is not without its challenges.

While most quantitative studies on FWA have focused on CWWs (as is the case with the study by, for example, Hyatt & Coslor, 2018)), there is a significant gap in quantitative research on the specific impacts of RWW. However, qualitative studies, such as those by Delaney and Casey (2022) and Lewis and Humbert (2010), have mainly focused on employees' perceptions of work flexibility and WLB, with an emphasis on the dynamics of managerial control and gender issues. Despite this, it has not yet been widely explored how RWWs can specifically affect stress and job satisfaction, nor have the experiences of employees and managers been explored, as evidenced by Lewis and Humbert (2010), leaving an important gap that the present study aims to fill.

By identifying and analyzing the key factors influencing the effects in stress and job satisfaction, the research on this topic can offer essential insights for employers, employees, and policymakers seeking to create healthier, more satisfying work environments in today's ever-changing world of work.

1.2. Research Objectives

The main objective of this dissertation is to study how employees experience the changes resulting from the implementation of a RWW, mainly in their levels of stress and job satisfaction.

However, there are some more specific objectives:

1. To explore employees' perspectives on the changes in their working life after the implementation of RWW, in terms of stress and job satisfaction.
2. To identify and analyze the strategies and mechanisms employees use to manage work-related stress and improve job satisfaction in the context of a RWW.
3. To provide qualitative insights that can guide organizations in improving the well-being of their employees when adopting a RWW.

4. Evaluate the changes that have most impacted employees' perceptions of stress and job satisfaction, verifying whether RWW can be an effective tool for reducing stress in the workplace while promoting satisfaction and WLB.

1.3. Dissertation Structure

The dissertation is organized into five chapters, each of which plays a crucial role in the overall structure of the work. Chapter 2 explores the literature review, addressing the definitions and consequences of a RWW, with particular attention to stress, job satisfaction and WLB. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used, describing the participants, the findings collection process and how the findings were analyzed. Chapter 4 focuses on the main results obtained, with special emphasis on the employees' perceptions of the effects of a RWW. Finally, Chapter 5 reflects on the theoretical and practical implications of these results, as well as offering recommendations for future implementation and research in the area.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Reduced Working Week

A reduced work week (RWW) is a Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) in which employees work for fewer hours during the week, compared to a standard full-time schedule, which typically involves a maximum of eight hours per day, five days per week, giving a total of 40 hours per week, according to Law no. 7/2009, of February 12, art. 203 (Portugal). In a RWW, according to Delaney and Casey (2022), the daily hours are reduced, thus diminishing the overall weekly hours.

This reduction in working hours can take different forms. One of the most discussed RWW forms is the four-day work week, with an extra day off and maintaining pay (Campbell, 2024; Delaney & Casey, 2022).

There are also organizations that are implementing the concept of an interspersed RWW, which is an alternative work schedule in which employees have an extra day off every other week, allowing them to alternate between shorter and longer working weeks.

A Compressed Work Week (CWW), on the other hand, as discussed by Mullens and Glorieux (2024), can involve working a full-time schedule over fewer days, such as compressing the usual working hours into a four-day week. In some models, like the '4/40', the full 40 hours are worked over 4 days, while other variations, such as the '3/36', involve a reduction in hours worked across 3 days.

Thus, a four-day work week can be either a RWW, in which the number of weekly hours diminishes (e.g. from 40 to 32 hours) or a CWW, in which the number of weekly hours keeps as is but is concentrated in 4 days (e.g. 40 weekly hours, 10 hours per day).

The reasons behind the adoption of a RWW vary between employees and organizations. Numerous employees see the RWW as an opportunity to have more time for activities related to their personal lives, which would normally be limited by the traditional work routine, and this factor ends up being a strong motivation for wanting to adopt this schedule (Delaney & Casey, 2022).

On the other hand, the main objective of organizations that aspire to adopt a RWW is to increase productivity, since research indicates that this model can lead to greater efficiency at work, helping employees to better manage their time and reducing distractions (Delaney & Casey, 2022). According to Hamermesh and Biddle (2023), these new working models have a major advantage associated with the recruitment process, as organizations are able to attract more talent, who consider that there are associated benefits, particularly in terms of Work-Life

Balance (WLB). In addition, there are other practical benefits associated with RWWs for employees, such as reduced travel costs and the ability to better accommodate childcare needs (Hamermesh & Biddle, 2023).

Most of the studies carried out on the subject of RWW are quantitative. McNall et al. (2009) showed that FWA, such as CWW, increase job satisfaction and reduce turnover intention. Brown and Pitt-Catsouphes (2016) later identified that workplace flexibility is associated with lower levels of stress. More recently, Li and Wang (2022) explored how the availability and use of WLB initiatives improve mental health, particularly among women.

There is therefore a lack of qualitative research on this topic. These qualitative studies could offer a deeper insight into the experiences and expectations of the employees and managers involved in implementing RWWs. This methodology ultimately uses approaches that allow for a more in-depth exploration of how RWWs are experienced by individuals, revealing nuances that quantitative data may not capture. As an example, one of the few qualitative studies on the subject was conducted by Lewis and Humbert (2010) who explore, through interviews, how perceptions of WLB vary between different groups of employees in a RWW.

For the implementation of a RWW to be successful, it must be carefully planned. Initially, it is very important to clearly define the objectives of implementing a RWW and involve employees in the planning process, ensuring that productivity expectations are realistic and achievable (Delaney & Casey, 2022). In the next phase, it is common to start by implementing it during a trial period, on a limited group of employees or departments, in order to assess its effectiveness and impacts. During this phase, various metrics such as productivity and employee satisfaction are evaluated (Delaney & Casey, 2022). Finally, if the results are indeed positive, the RWW can be implemented more widely, with continuous adjustments based on feedback from employees and the needs of the organization (Lewis & Humbert, 2010).

2.2 Impacts of a Reduced Working Week

2.2.1 Impacts of a Reduced Working Week on Employee Stress

The effects of a RWW on employee stress are complex and can vary depending on how the reduction in working hours is implemented and the specific working environment conditions that each organization provides.

According to Meltzer et al. (as cited in Ganster & Rosen, 2013, p.1091) “stress can be thought of as (a) a feature of the external environment that acts on an individual, (b) the individual’s responses (psychological, physiological, and behavioral) to environmental

demands, threats, and challenges, or (c) the interaction of the two”. Thus, stress can be seen from various perspectives: as an external pressure, as an individual reaction, or as a combination of both. However, regardless of the perspective adopted, stress often manifests itself as a physiological reaction to an external stimulus perceived as negative or threatening, resulting in physical, emotional and psychological disturbances.

Stress is often viewed as a dynamic interaction between an individual and their environment. In the context of work, “work stress” is defined as the process by which psychological experiences and demands in the workplace (called “stressors”) produce short-term changes (called “strains”) and long-term changes in employees' mental and physical health (Ganster & Rosen, 2013).

Regarding the relationship between RWWs and stress, the findings are largely consistent. Brown and Pitt-Catsouphes (2016) observed that access to and use of FWAs, which included policies such as CWWs that share similarities with RWWs—namely the reduction in the number of working days—was associated with lower stress levels. Similarly, Li and Wang (2022) found that the perceived availability of RWWs contributes to improving employees' mental health.

However, the RWW can increase employees' stress levels, especially if the reduction in the number of working hours is not accompanied by a proportional decrease in demands and workload. Delaney and Casey (2022) point out that employees have described an intensification of work activities, having to accomplish the same number of tasks in less time. This can lead to employees perceiving a faster-paced and more stressful work environment, where they feel greater pressure to maintain productivity levels, even with less time available. As such, RWW can intensify stress levels, as employees may try to compensate for the lack of time by increasing the intensity of their work (Delaney & Casey, 2022).

In line with this, Brown and Pitt-Catsouphes (2016) argue that a reduction in the number of working hours, when implemented without proper planning and without taking into account the needs and capabilities of employees, can generate a sense of loss of control. This increase in stress levels, according to studies by Delaney and Casey (2022), stems from the accelerated pace needed to fulfill the same workload in fewer hours, which in some cases has also resulted in friction between colleagues.

There are therefore several factors that can cause stress in the workplace. Work intensification (Delaney & Casey, 2022), lack of autonomy and control over daily tasks (Brown & Pitt-Catsouphes, 2016), perceived inequalities and lack of organizational support (Brown &

Pitt-Catsouphe, 2016; Delaney & Casey, 2022) are the factors that contribute the most to stress.

2.2.2 Impacts of a Reduced Working Week on Job Satisfaction

"Job satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). The RWW has been seen as a successful model for improving satisfaction among employees, which is a crucial component of successful organizations.

Allen's (2001) study shows that employees in 'family-supportive' organizations usually report a higher level of job satisfaction and a lower turnover intention. This means that implementing a RWW model as part of a family policy can improve job satisfaction.

The study of Li and Wang (2022) reinforced this idea by stating that initiatives that make it easier to reconcile work and family improve employee satisfaction and mental health. A RWW fits into such an initiative, as it reduces the number of working hours. Li and Wang (2022) conclude that both the perceived availability of these initiatives and their actual use are associated with improvements in job satisfaction and a reduction in work-family conflict. Consequently, by providing employees with additional time for personal and family activities, a RWW increases satisfaction with work.

The study by Kwon and Kim-Goh (2023) mentions the impact of FWA, namely RWWs, on job satisfaction. This study points out that these options increase job satisfaction, especially in employees who, while maintaining regular face-to-face interactions, have the flexibility to work remotely. This again suggests that this work model contributes to employee satisfaction.

2.2.3 Impacts of a Reduced Working Week on Work-Life Balance

The RWW is also considered as one of the best ways for enhancing employees' WLB.

"WLB is 'the extent to which an individual is able to adequately manage the multiple roles in their life, including work, family and other major responsibilities'" (Haar, 2013, p. 3308 cited by Ferdous et al. (2020)). This balance assumes that one has to at least sustain or improve the quality of work accomplished and the cooperation with people in these two domains (Ferdous et al., 2020).

This is currently a very relevant concept, both for the business community and for the employees themselves. This is because WLB has a direct impact on physical and mental health of the employees where the organization operates. It has been demonstrated that employees tend to be more productive and less stressed when there is an optimal balance between work

and personal life (Wadsworth & Facer, 2016). As such, a positive WLB can also decrease the probability of developing stress related illnesses.

As stated above, RWWs provide employees with more time outside of work, and the opportunity to spend this time on themselves, their friends and their families. In line with this, RWWs have been found to improve WLB (Delaney & Casey, 2022).

This increase in time for yourself is also usually linked to a feeling of control over your own life in general (Hyatt & Coslor, 2018).

Nonetheless, if the reduction in working hours is not tied with a decrease in the workload, employees can experience an increase in work pressures during their working days, which has a negative impact on WLB (Wadsworth & Facer, 2016). Employees may even feel the need to work on their day off to compensate for the increased workload (Mullens & Glorieux, 2024).

Although RWW has been explored in quantitative terms, there is still a considerable gap in qualitative research that examines employees' experiences in depth. Qualitative studies such as Delaney and Casey (2022) and Lewis and Humbert (2010) have focused on employees' perceptions of flexible working and WLB, highlighting issues related to managerial control and gender. Although studies like Delaney and Casey (2022) have touched on the relationship between RWW and stress, they did not explore this theme in-depth, as their primary focus was not on stress as a central variable. This leaves room for further research to investigate the direct impact of RWW on stress and job satisfaction in greater detail and context.

This study aims to fill this gap by qualitatively exploring the perceptions and experiences of employees who have adopted a RWW. This research also aims to identify the strategies used by employees to manage stress, offering valuable insights for organizations seeking to improve their employees' well-being through RWWs.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The goal of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how Reduced Work Weeks (RWW) are perceived, implemented, and experienced, including their potential implications for individuals' well-being and broader life contexts. In order to study in depth the unique experiences of employees in a reduced labor model, the researcher decided to develop a qualitative study in which semi-structured interviews were carried out.

Semi-structured interviews allow flexibility between closed and open questions, generating a fluid and adaptive conversation with the interviewee. One of the major advantages of this method is the possibility of exploring topics that were not defined a priori in the interview script and asking additional questions to deepen understanding on issues considered relevant, as mentioned by the participants (Adams, 2015).

3.1 Research Participants

To conduct this research, a group of 20 individuals working under RWW were interviewed. A comprehensive table detailing the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants is available in Annex A. This group of individuals reflected a broad spectrum of life stages and professional experiences, with ages ranging from 24 to 51. The participants were mostly women (N=14; 70%), with men making up only 30 per cent of the sample (N=6). Regarding educational qualifications, 8 participants had completed a bachelor's degree, while 6 had obtained a master's degree. In addition, 5 participants had completed high school and 1 participant had a basic education level.

As for the participants' experience in their current job, the findings reveal a mixture of employees with little time in the job and more experienced professionals, with the employee with the least seniority in their current organization having been there for 1 year and 3 months, while there were 6 participants who had been in their current organization for 10 years. The interviewed participants performed various roles, primarily in the sectors of education (55%), marketing (25%), and technology (10%). There were also participants who worked in organizations within the financial sector (5%) and design sector (5%). The roles that participants performed within organizations varied widely, encompassing areas such as product design, programming, digital marketing, data analysis, growth management, accounting, and education. Two of the participants were members of the board of directors.

The organizations they worked for varied in size, ranging from small organizations with 13 employees to medium-sized organizations with up to 300 employees. Employees with different types of arrangements within the RWW were interviewed, with 14 (70%) participants

having a day off every other week and 6 (30%) having one day off per working week. Thus, weeks with reduced working hours ranged from 28 to 36 hours a week. Based on the Labor Code, normal daily working hours cannot exceed 8 hours (Law no. 7/2009, of February 12, art. 203, Portugal). Regarding the participants in the study, there were employees whose organization decided to maintain the 8-hour working day (10 participants, 50%), and others who reduced (5 participants, 25%) or increased (5 participants, 25%) the daily working hours. At the time of the interviews with employees who were working in a RWW, five of the participants (25%) reported working 9 hours a day, while 30% worked 7 and a half hours and 20% only 7 hours a day. The rest maintained their daily working hours (8 hours). Within the sample, there were several approaches to RWW, which we will analyze and detail throughout the study.

Overall, the diversity in age, gender, education, and professional experience among the participants provided a rich and varied perspective on the reduced working week, generating valuable insights for this study.

3.2. Data Collection

In this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted, as mentioned above. The main reason for this choice was that this method allowed for authentic and genuine conversations with the participants, based on predefined questions and topics with the flexibility to adjust the conversation, thus allowing for a better understanding of the nuances and complexity of the participants' personal experiences that would not have been achieved in other ways (Adams, 2015). The interviews were conducted over the course of a month, from April 1 to May 2, 2024. Participants were contacted individually, and the sample was chosen by convenience, with participants passing the word on to friends and colleagues. Each interview lasted between 9 and 35 minutes, with an average of 22 minutes. Only two interviews lasted around 9 minutes, which means that these cases are exceptions. Interviews were conducted in Portuguese to ensure that the participants felt comfortable speaking in their mother tongue. Most of the interviews (65%) were conducted face-to-face at the participants' place of work, while the remainder (35%) were conducted via Zoom to offer flexibility to those who preferred or needed a remote option.

The interview was organized into three key phases—trial planning, trial experience, and post-trial reflections—based on methods from studies by Delaney and Casey (2022), and Borgkvist et al. (2021). This structure helped to explore not just the professional side of the RWW, but also the personal experiences of the participants and their reflections afterward.

Following the advice of Madill (2021), the interviews began with some straightforward questions to help participants feel comfortable and to set the stage for deeper discussions. After conducting the first two interviews, it was noticed that a couple of questions were leading to repetitive answers, and the script was streamlined. This led to better conversation flow and more focus on the most important aspects of their experiences.

The updated interview script, which reflects these changes, can be found in Annex B. The script has a total of 12 questions, divided into 3 sections, mentioned above. The first section – trial planning – aims to understand the professional context of the participants and how the RWW was implemented in different organizations, including the adopted policies, the implementation process, and the flexibility in choosing to participate. The second section – trial experience – studies the impacts of the RWW on employees, particularly concerning stress levels, job satisfaction, and the balance between professional and personal responsibilities, exploring the challenges faced and the perceived changes after implementation. The third and final section – post-trial reflections – assesses individual preferences and motivations related to the RWW.

The semi-structured format of the interviews allowed for both structured questions and the flexibility to follow up on interesting points raised by the participants. The interview guide included questions about their overall experience with the RWW, specific challenges and benefits they encountered, the impact on Work-Life Balance, and any suggestions for improvement. With the full consent of the participants, all interviews were audio-recorded to capture their responses accurately. This consent was obtained through the signing of an informed consent form, as detailed in Annex C. Subsequently, the participants were sent a sociodemographic questionnaire (Annex D) to complete.

3.3. Data Analysis

After collecting the findings, the 20 interviews were transcribed in their entirety using Escriba and audio recording. Then, with the support of MAXQDA software, a template analysis of the results collected was carried out. The template analysis was conducted according to Brooks et al. (2015), who propose a flexible approach. Additionally, previous studies, such as those by Daniels, Watson, and Gedikli (2017), Radcliffe and Cassell (2014), and Low et al. (2016) were used as references to guide the structuring of the analysis and interpretation of themes.

This method, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), allows for a flexible approach, allowing categories to be defined, modified and even excluded as necessary during the analysis process. Initially, categories were defined based on the existing literature and the interview

script used (deductive approach), but the process also allowed for the identification of new themes emerging directly from the themes the participants mentioned (inductive approach). This combination of methods is highlighted by Low et al. (2016) as an effective way of capturing both pre-defined themes and unexpected themes mentioned during qualitative analysis.

At this stage, an initial code with themes based on the interview script and existing literature (deductive approach) was defined. The first version of the template can be found in Annex E for consultation. The predefined categories based on the interview script and the existing literature were grounded on relevant studies addressing the reduced work week and its impact on employees' experiences. Specifically, the categories were developed based on the studies by Borgkvist et al. (2021), which provided insights and highlighted the importance of how this model is implemented and the different policies related to the RWW; Delaney and Casey (2022), whose approaches drew attention to the challenges, performance, and post-experience reflections. Additionally, the category related to changes in organizational culture with the RWW was based on the study by Kossek and Distelberg (2009).

The text segments of the interviews were then analyzed and coded using categories defined a priori based on existing literature and the interview script (deductive approach). Over the course of the analysis, and as the interviews allowed for a broad and in-depth understanding of the participants' responses, this initial coding was altered, with categories being added based on the topics mentioned during the interviews (inductive approach) and also eliminated. At the end of this process, we arrived at the Final Template Code (Appendix F), which reflects the relevant themes mentioned by the participants. In this process, 83 new subcategories were created, and they are identified in italics in Annex F. Finally, the findings were written up, bringing each theme to life with quotes from the interviews. This process allowed for a deep dive into the participants' experiences and provided meaningful insights into how the RWW impacted their lives.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

In this qualitative research, significant emphasis was placed on compliance with ethical standards, with particular attention to the guidelines highlighted by Corbin and Strauss (2015). Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were duly informed about the aims and objectives of the study, enabling them to make informed decisions about their participation. Informed consent was obtained by signing forms, and all participants authorized the recording

of the interviews. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the names of the participants were concealed. To distinguish them from each other, each participant was identified by the letter “I” followed by a number from 1 to 20 (e.g. I8). The interviews were conducted in private and secure locations, and the findings were stored on the researcher's computer to avoid any breach of confidentiality, with access restricted to the researcher and the dissertation supervisor. All recordings were erased after transcription.

The ethical responsibilities of the researcher were central throughout the study. As emphasized by Corbin and Strauss (2015), researchers have a duty to conduct their work with integrity and commitment, ensuring that the research is carried out with the highest level of professionalism and ethical responsibility. In addition, this research followed the guidelines of ISCTE-IUL's Code of Ethical Conduct, which stresses the importance of protecting the rights, dignity and well-being of participants. Among ISCTE's standards is the principle of “confidentiality, ensuring that the information obtained is protected from unauthorized access”, as well as respect for informed consent and the protection of personal data (ISCTE-IUL, 2016).

3.5. Quality Assurance

To ensure the quality of this study, the guidelines of Bauer and Gaskell (2000) were followed.

Regarding the criterion of transparency (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000), the results coding and analysis process was clearly and thoroughly described, allowing the reader to understand how the themes were developed. Furthermore, the study includes direct quotations from participants in the results section, illustrating the different categories and subcategories identified. Due to confidentiality concerns, the full interview transcripts were not made available, but the quotations provided in the Results section allow for the validation of data interpretation, as recommended by Bauer and Gaskell (2000).

Reliability was ensured through several stages of review and validation of the categories and subcategories throughout the coding process. The study supervisors reviewed the analyses, ensuring that the results interpretations were consistent and as unbiased as possible, not influenced by any context or personal opinion (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000). Additionally, careful reflection was conducted on potential personal and professional influences during the research process, to minimize the researcher's biases.

Finally, following Bauer and Gaskell's (2000) guidelines, the relevance – or surprise value – of the results was guaranteed by linking the findings of this study to existing literature on the RWW, which strengthens the conclusions and contributes to both theoretical and practical knowledge on the impact of reduced working hours on employee well-being.

Chapter 4: Findings

As mentioned above, a template analysis was carried out on the findings collected through the 20 interviews conducted. This chapter presents the results of this qualitative analysis, the main aim of which is to assess the impact of the Reduced Working Week (RWW) on employee stress and satisfaction. This analysis resulted in a total of 9 categories and 85 sub-categories.

The results will be presented based on the structure of the analysis carried out, organized according to the main categories in the template code, although some emerged during the analysis of the interviews. Firstly, the different processes involved in implementing the RWW will be described, followed by the perceived impact on employee satisfaction and stress. The results relating to productivity and general perceptions of this policy are then presented.

In this chapter, the results of the findings collected are explained, based on the categories and sub-categories of the final code, and the conclusions will be justified by quotes from the participants. These direct quotes from the interviews are intended to give the reader the maximum understanding of the participants' experiences.

The results were analyzed based on the number of times each theme was mentioned during all the interviews (intra-individual results) and also based on the number of participants who mentioned each theme (inter-individual results, i.e., number of occurrences). Both results will be presented: in the tables that are found throughout this chapter, Number of Mentions is identified as NM, and Number of Occurrences, in turn, as NO.

4.1. Reduced Working Week Policy

4.1.1. Reduced Working Week Implementation Time

The implementation time of the RWW varied significantly between the organizations studied. Some organizations implemented the model in 2022 (NO = 7) and others in 2023 (NO = 11). A minority of organizations (NO = 2) had already implemented this working model in 2021. Most of the organizations took part in a 6-month Pilot Project organized by the Portuguese government.

From now on, we will use the acronym PPP to refer to the Portugal Pilot Project.

4.1.2. Reduced Working Week Implementation Process

4.1.2.1 Pilot phase in the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

Nine of the participants mentioned that their organizations had implemented the RWW with a pilot phase, which allowed for adjustments and adaptations before final adoption. In essence,

it turned out to be a test phase, totally reversible, very important for identifying challenges and opportunities, as participant 1 mentioned: *"we're still in a test phase, i.e. we're contractually in a two-year test phase of the model, it can't be renewed or not until October 2024, so I think it ends up being like all tests, you realize what works best, what works worst and you adapt"*. However, the duration of this pilot phase varied, as we can see from the example of participant 14: *"So the organization had a trial period, I think we tried it out for a month, we started with a month to see how we were going to react, how we were going to get used to this new idea."*

4.1.2.2 Days offs Models

Nine of the participants mentioned that their organizations had adopted a fixed slack model, usually on Fridays. However, in some cases and due to the sector of activity of the organization in question and its need to remain open 5 working days a week, it was necessary to adopt rotating days off, as was the case with participant 13 *"in our model we don't work on Fridays, in the case of our team, there is another team that sometimes doesn't work on Mondays, because from Monday to Friday there always has to be someone here to guarantee certain functions, so there are teams that don't work on Fridays, others that don't work on Mondays."* It's important to mention that even in these organizations where the days off were 'mirrored', they were nevertheless fixed for each department or employee.

A relevant issue raised by some of the participants was the practice adopted in weeks that coincide with official public holidays: in these cases, participants reported that they missed out on the additional day off offered by the organization, since the public holiday replaced the usual weekly day off.

4.1.2.3 Implementation Communication

One of the crucial factors in the successful implementation of the RWW is communication (NO = 5), both towards employees and clients. In some organizations, the CEO led the communication, as participant 2 mentions *"It was communicated by the CEO in a meeting"*. Other organizations, on the other hand, turned to specialized organizations, as participant 7 explains *"I think communication is very important both internally and externally, we turned to a communication organization to communicate this with the parents because it's a new thing and therefore could generate a lot of concern, and that was important for us. How do you communicate that all the staff will be working less time? And it was good, because the communication was very well done and very well received (...)"*.

4.1.2.4 Implementation Support

The support the organizations received during implementation was varied (NO = 2) and included support from academic institutions and expert advice. Participant 5 mentions that *"(...) another thing that was also very nice, which I also recommend, was that we created a relationship there with at least one other person who was from another organization doing this, so it also cleared up a lot of doubts for us."*

However, there was no direct financial support, as expressed by participant 5: *"we didn't have any financial support, we had moral, ethical, training support, etc"*.

4.1.3. Organization Strategy with the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

Table 4.1 summarizes the main sub-themes identified as the organizations' strategy for implementing the RWW.

Table 4.1 Organization Strategy with the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>1.3.1. Well-being and quality of life of employees with a reduced working week</i>	4	4
<i>1.3.2. Impact on the customer of services or goods with a reduced working week</i>	1	1
<i>1.3.3. Innovation and partnerships with a reduced working week</i>	1	1
<i>1.3.4. Maintaining and increasing productivity with a reduced working week</i>	2	2
<i>1.3.5. Work-life balance with a reduced working week</i>	2	2
Total	10	10

One of the main priorities for the organizations when they implemented the RWW was the well-being and quality of life of their employees (NO = 4), as participant 7 points out, *"(...) it came about as part of our employee well-being policy"*.

In addition, the implementation of the RWW was aimed at improving employees' Work-Life Balance (WLB) (NO = 2): *"The only thing they ask is that we be as productive as possible in those four days, and then that we use the fifth day for our internal productivity"* (I18).

Maintaining and possibly increasing productivity were also critical factors (NO = 2) that led organizations to implement this new regime: *"with the first premise that we shouldn't decrease productivity and that, in theory, studies say that productivity could even increase. In*

the first phase we shouldn't reduce productivity and in the second phase we should see productivity increase as the weeks and months go by" (I13).

The organizations were also concerned about the impact of this change on customers (NO = 1). In the case of a nursery school, it was mentioned: *"what about the children: is this good for the children, is it not good for the children?"* (I5).

Finally, innovation was another strategic pillar (NO = 1), with some organizations taking the opportunity to strengthen partnerships with institutions and explore new ways of working: *"And it came very much in our line and in our innovation axis, which is within what is also our mission, which is to always work together with academia and therefore do evidence-based work"* (I7).

4.1.4. Flexibility in Implementing the Reduced Working Week

Table 4.2 presents the sub-themes related to flexibility in the implementation of the RWW, detailing the options for adherence, the time off models adopted, and the practices for changing days and flexible working hours.

Table 4.2 Flexibility in Implementing the Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>1.4.1. Option to adhere to the reduced working week</i>	17	16
<i>1.4.2. Mandatory participation in the reduced working week</i>	3	3
<i>1.4.3. Fixed day off model in the reduced working week</i>	24	20
<i>1.4.4. Rotational day off model in the reduced working week</i>	2	2
<i>1.4.5. Exchange of days off in the reduced working week</i>	12	10
<i>1.4.6. Flexible scheduling in the reduced working week</i>	13	9
Total	71	60

Flexibility in implementing the RWW was an essential aspect of the policy's success. With regard to days off models, the fixed day off model was the most widely adopted, mentioned by 20 participants and helped to maintain consistency and predictability for employees. In contrast, the rotating day off model was adopted by fewer organizations, being mentioned only twice, suggesting that this option was less popular due to the complexity of the logistical management it can involve, although, as participant 1 mentioned, they may find it easier to change the day off in exceptional situations: *"Yes, basically the day off is already predefined,*

that is, imagine one week you have Monday off, one week here you have Tuesday off, but you end up.... given that they don't have a fixed day off, when they have an eventuality, they can swap with each other to make their personal lives easier too." This possibility of swapping days off was mentioned by 10 participants and allowed them to adjust their schedules according to their personal needs. However, some participants mentioned that *"it's much easier if we keep the same day. But imagine I have an appointment at the hospital, and these are appointments that are very difficult to change. I talk to my colleague about that day, and we switch"* (I19).

Most of organizations opted to give employees the choice of whether they wanted to join the RWW, with 16 participants mentioning this topic. And some of the participants mentioned that the joining rate was quite high: *"(...) there was a choice, yes, but there were only two people who didn't choose out of the many who were in the organization."* (I20). On the other hand, only 3 participants were in organizations that had opted for mandatory implementation of the RWW.

Finally, flexible working hours, mentioned by 9 participants, provided an additional adaptation, allowing employees to manage their working hours more effectively: *"I'm more of a morning person, so I end up going in earlier so I can leave earlier because at the end of the day I know I'm not going to be as productive as I am in the morning, there are people who are the opposite, who are much more active (...)"* (I1).

4.2. Expectations and Preferences regarding the Reduced Working Week

Table 4.3 shows the positive and negative expectations regarding the RWW.

Table 4.3 Expectations regarding the Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
2.1. Positive expectations regarding the reduced working week	8	8
<i>2.1.1. Positive emotional reactions regarding the reduced working week</i>	3	3
<i>2.1.2. Perception of benefits from the implementation of the reduced working week</i>	2	2
<i>2.1.3. Confidence in the implementation of the reduced working week</i>	3	3
2.2. Negative expectations regarding the reduced working week.	33	25
<i>2.2.1. Impact on well-being and mental health with the reduced working week</i>	1	1
<i>2.2.2. Increase in workload with the reduced working week</i>	6	5
<i>2.2.3. Impact on task and responsibility management with the reduced working week</i>	4	2
<i>2.2.4. Salary cuts with the reduced working week</i>	6	5
<i>2.2.5. Cuts in benefits and vacation with the reduced working week</i>	1	1
<i>2.2.6. Fear of external reactions to the reduced working week</i>	7	4
<i>2.2.7. Concerns about the logistical feasibility of the reduced working week</i>	8	7
Total	41	33

Before the RWW was implemented in organizations, participants had expectations about it, and most employees had negative expectations (NO = 25).

Concerns were raised about the logistical feasibility of the RWW (NO = 7), with some participants doubting how it could be successfully implemented in their specific working environment. *"At first I doubted everything, how it was possible, because they hadn't explained to us how it was going to be, and then the fact that we work 4 days, I didn't understand how it was going to be... The logistics. How it was going to be possible..."* (I12).

Several participants expressed their concern about the increased workload (NO = 5), as mentioned in interview 8: *"I was a bit afraid of having to work longer during those days, during those four days that I work, because of Friday, I was afraid of that."* The possibility of a pay cut was also mentioned a lot (NO = 5): *"(...) whether they were going to touch our salaries or not, I think everything would influence it... I speak for myself, and I was a bit on the back foot"* (I12).

Four of the participants expressed their fear of external reactions, both from clients and from the board, in one specific case where it was the employee who proposed the implementation of this work model: *"and also the question of not being well accepted by the older members of management"* (I11).

In addition, there was apprehension about the impact on the management of tasks and responsibilities with the RWW (NO = 2). Finally, the negative expectations mentioned were

possible impacts on mental health, as expressed by one participant who mentioned: *"(...) it was really getting a bit lower, that the stress would take over a bit"* and cuts in benefits and vacations (NO = 1).

However, not all expectations were negative. On the positive side (NO = 8), many participants expressed enthusiasm and optimism about the new work model (NO = 3). For example, one participant commented: *"(...) we were super excited, let's do it"* (I9). In addition, three participants showed their confidence that the implementation would be successful, as in the case of participant 6: *"I thought: we're capable, we've been together for a long time, we'll manage"*.

This enthusiasm was mentioned by others who saw the RWW as a beneficial change (NO = 2), allowing them more personal time without a reduction in salary. One interviewee mentioned: *"because otherwise we weren't going to reduce our salary, we'd have one more day, it all sounded great to me"* (I20).

Table 4.4 presents the employees' preferences regarding the RWW.

Table 4.4 Preferences regarding the Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>2.3.1. Preference for fixed days off in the reduced working week</i>	5	4
<i>2.3.2. Preference for alternative models of days off in the reduced working wee</i>	1	1
<i>2.3.3. Preference for full days off in the reduced working week</i>	2	1
Total	8	6

The results show that some of participants prefer a model of fixed days off (NO = 4): *"I much prefer it, or rather, I've really liked that it's a fixed day because it always helps me organize"* (I13). Although less frequent, there is also a preference for full days off (NO = 1), since one participant mentions that *"I think I prefer it like this, with the whole day, because I really switch off on Thursday night and then I don't pick things up again until Monday, whereas in the other organization I was in, it went on for a long time(...) and then it was half past three and that afternoon was too short to enjoy (...)"*.

Only one participant expressed a preference for alternative time off models, indicating that he prefers the model of a day off every other week because *"you can manage your productivity. (...) I think it's good to stimulate, in other words, not to give everything away straight away."* (I18).

4.3. Changes in the Organization with the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

The following results show the changes in the organizations mentioned by the participants with the implementation of the RWW.

4.3.1 Changes in Workload with the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

Table 4.5 presents the Changes in Workload with the Implementation of the RWW.

Table 4.5 Changes in Workload with the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>3.1.1. Modifications in work schedule with the implementation of the reduced working week</i>	9	6
<i>3.1.2. Need for overtime work with the reduced working week</i>	6	5
<i>3.1.3. Absence of workload increase with the implementation of the reduced working week</i>	9	8
<i>3.1.4. Presence of workload increase with the implementation of the reduced working week</i>	2	2
Total	26	21

The results indicate that the implementation of the RWW has brought several changes to the workload.

The absence of work overload was a positive point highlighted by several participants (NO = 8), who reported that the new working hours fitted in well with their responsibilities without increasing the pressure. However, in some cases a work overload was noted (NO = 2), especially in leadership positions, where the organization of tasks suffered a more significant impact: *"Particularly with the technical director (...), the director had a lot more work because she had to organize other points and unintentionally delay other work that seems more bureaucratic, but which is also very important"* (I7).

Changes to working hours were also mentioned (NO = 6), as there was a need to increase the number of hours worked each day to compensate for the day off: *"I work from Monday to Thursday. And instead of eight, which is normal, I work nine hours a day"* (I2).

Although some participants indicated the occasional need to do extra work to fulfill the weekly tasks (NO = 5), this situation was not recurrent and, in many cases, it was possible to maintain the balance without overloading: *"I think it may have happened once, to bring something forward on Fridays or maybe compensate a little on other days since I wasn't going to work on Fridays, but most of the time I don't think it had an impact"* (I14).

4.3.2 Changes in Salary with the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

The results indicate that, with the implementation of the RWW, the salary of the 20 participants was preserved, and this theme was mentioned 23 times. There were no salary cuts, which was a positive factor widely recognized by the participants, who valued maintaining their income despite the reduction in working days, as mentioned by participant 11 *"We agreed that the salary would be maintained, in other words, there were no salary cuts."*

4.3.3 Changes in Costs for the Organization with the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

The implementation of the RWW did not result in significant increases in costs for most organizations. Some managed to maintain operating cost levels by adjusting workloads and optimizing processes. However, 5 participants mentioned that costs had increased, due to the hiring of more employees, in organizations that had continued to operate normal hours, but had nevertheless reduced the number of hours worked by participants: *"And we have the financial cost. There has actually been an increase because we've had to hire one more person. There's a 5% increase in the number of employees and the proportional financial cost of the operational assistant who was hired"* (I7). Participants 5 and 7 mentioned more concrete data on this subject, which shows that they have a managerial position that has given them access to this information. The participants with more mundane positions ended up highlighting only what was most obvious - that hiring costs had increased - without going into so much detail.

4.3.4 Changes in Customer Satisfaction with services or goods with the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

Regarding the impact that the implementation of the RWW has had on customer satisfaction, this topic was mentioned by 9 participants, 23 times. All the participants pointed out that their clients supported this change, appreciating the balance it gave the staff, which in turn was reflected in the quality of the work. Participant 14 said: *"By chance, all the clients we had at the time were happy to accept the idea and, in the meantime, we've already had a lot of other clients and they already know that there is this premise in our organization of every other week, we have less than one working day and, as I said, it was very well received"*. Furthermore, the adaptation process went smoothly, and the clients didn't express any significant concerns.

4.3.5 Changes in the Structure and Organization of organizations with the Reduced Working Week

Table 4.6 outlines the changes in the structure and organization of organizations with the implementation of the RWW, highlighting key areas such as adaptation and organization, communication, employee commitment, time management, work dynamics, and the use of tools and resources.

Table 4.6 *Changes in the Structure and Organization of organizations with the Reduced Working Week*

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>3.5.1. Adaptation and organization with the reduced working week</i>	11	7
<i>3.5.2. Communication and collaboration with the reduced working week</i>	3	2
<i>3.5.3. Commitment and flexibility of employees with the reduced working week</i>	9	5
<i>3.5.4. Planning and time management with the reduced working week</i>	8	6
<i>3.5.5. Impact on work dynamics with the reduced working week</i>	4	3
<i>3.5.6. Use of tools and resources with the reduced working week</i>	3	2
Total	38	25

Organizations have to adjust to the RWW in order to continue producing high-quality work even with fewer hours worked each week (NO = 7). It was previously stated that *"we had to get our projects done with 4 fewer hours in the week"* (I1). To guarantee that everyone benefited from the reduced working model, the teams' logistics had to be modified, and it was vital *"not to undermine the quality of our operation"* (I1). As was said, preparation and organization were essential: *"We had to ensure that all the rooms had adequate supervision"* (I7).

Changes in planning and time management were also mentioned by the participants (NO = 6). As participant 8 explains, *"I think there has been some adaptation by the organization, not in reducing the workload, but in adapting more priority tasks and putting them in the pipeline for later with more time, more secondary tasks that can't be done in five days"*, employees needed to manage their time carefully to meet objectives within a RWW.

As mentioned by participant 5, *"what I felt was that there was more capacity, flexibility on the part of people to try and find solutions, and if they didn't, then yes, but to try and find solutions"*, in other words, this commitment and flexibility on the part of the employees (NO = 5) was crucial to the successful implementation of the RWW and had an impact on reducing the number of absences.

In addition, there was a notable impact on work dynamics (NO = 3), showing that the RWW required adjustments in the way teams interacted and managed their workload. For example, participant 6 mentioned that he started seeing his colleagues less, giving the example

that *"I don't come in on Monday, she had Tuesday off. So, we were here all weekend and only saw each other on Wednesday. We used to see each other from Monday to Friday, if we didn't miss anything."*

Participants also noted how they believed that there had been a shift in the organization's culture of communication and collaboration (NO = 2), which suggested that regular and transparent communication was crucial to the successful execution of the RWW. Participant 13 stated that *" (...) there's a bit more communication between departments (...), we've started to direct topics more towards people according to each function, according to each specialty of each team. And I think that's improved a little. Internal human resources communication has also started to become more recurrent"*.

Finally, the use of tools and resources was discussed by 2 participants, indicating that technology and other resources were used to ensure efficiency under the new working conditions. Participants 17 and 18 mentioned the use of an application called *Slack* where *"people share more or less what they had to do on the Friday they didn't work"* (I7). This participant suggested implementing a subscription to the *Urban Sports Club* in his organization, *"to encourage people to do sport"*.

These changes collectively demonstrate the importance of strategic adjustments to the structure and organization of organizations to successfully implement the RWW.

4.3.6 Changes associated with Remote Work

Table 4.7 summarizes the changes associated with remote work in the context of the RWW.

Table 4.7 Changes associated with Remote Work

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>3.6.1. Success of the reduced working week associated with remote work</i>	1	1
<i>3.6.2. Reduction in the number of offices due to remote work</i>	2	1
<i>3.6.3. Remote work allowance</i>	2	2
<i>3.6.4. Support and adequacy of equipment and practices for remote work</i>	2	2
<i>3.6.5. Flexibility and productivity in remote work</i>	10	6
<i>3.6.6. Increase in work-life balance with remote work</i>	13	9
<i>3.6.7. Decrease in work-life balance with remote work</i>	1	1
<i>3.6.8. Changes in social interactions with remote work</i>	9	7
Total	40	29

As evidenced by the content of the interviews, remote working has contributed to an increase in WLB (NO = 9): *"I gain time, I find it easier (...) to make my personal life more*

efficient. Just now, I was in a meeting, and I quickly put a washing machine on while I was in the meeting and it's really easy to reconcile and it helps a lot" (I14). The time saved on transportation was also mentioned, and can be used to do household tasks, rest, do sports, or leisure activities, such as spending time with family and friends, for example. However, participant 20 mentioned a possible reduction in this balance in certain cases: *"sometimes the opposite also happens, which is that in leisure time I'm working"*, demonstrating that some people will find it more difficult to disconnect from work if they are working from home.

The findings shows that remote working has led to some changes in employees' social interactions (NO = 7), leading some organizations to implement policies to combat this decrease in social interactions, as participant 2 mentions: *"with remote work we have less personal contact with the rest of the people we work with on a day-to-day basis (...), and so there's more need for these team building events to be more social, and that wasn't there before and now there is."*

The flexibility and productivity that remote working allows were highly valued by employees (NO = 6), and it was mentioned that even those in a hybrid model have the flexibility to choose the days when they go to the office, and there is no obligation associated with it. Participant 1 emphasized the ability to plan and manage work independently and effectively: *"Remote work gives us this openness to be able to have this balance here of when it's good for us to come in, based on the type of person we are"*. And he justified the fact that he is more productive at home with the fact that *"all the people while I'm there (in the office) know us, they always come to talk to you and end up interrupting more in an office context than at home. At home you can see a Teams pop-up, (...) you're finishing some thinking, and you finish that thinking and only then do you see that Teams pop-up"*.

It should be noted that the change to a remote model has other associated changes. Support and the suitability of equipment were points of attention (NO = 2), highlighting the importance of appropriate resources to support this way of working: *"On a remote side, we send monitors home, computers, radios, headsets... all kinds of equipment that is needed. We have employees who have chairs from the organization that they have taken home to ensure that they have all the comfort and equipment to be able to do their job with the same quality as they would in an office context, so I think (...) in a remote aspect there was this concern"* (I1). Participant 20 also mentioned that *"a kind of best practice was sent out for when you're always online: having the camera on, always talking to someone every day, not going a whole day without talking to anyone"*.

Two of the participants mentioned that, in their organizations, there was a remote work allowance associated: *"there was even a slight increase because we went to 100% remote work from a remote work allowance"* (I20).

In addition, participant 1 mentioned that the RWW *"works above all in conjunction with the remote working model in our case because we have 36 hours and 9 hours a day, I think the functionality is more successful because it's combined with remote working because if we had to go to the office every day and work an extra hour a day with the travel, we probably wouldn't be able to retain as much as we ended up retaining"*, adding that *"maybe in organizations that have kept the 32 hours (. ...), maybe it's a bit different, presential work might not have as much of an impact"*.

In terms of physical changes, there was a reduction in the number of offices due to the increase in remote working (NO = 1), which was a strategy to ensure operational efficiency and reduce costs associated with physical space: *"in 2022 we had 4 offices, Aveiro, Torres Vedras, Braga and Lisbon. And (...) when the organization declared 100% remote, we closed two of our offices"* (I1).

4.4. Human Resources Practices and Strategies in the Reduced Working Week

4.4.1. Performance Management and Evaluation Process with the Reduced Working Week

Table 4.8 provides an overview of the performance management and evaluation process associated with the RWW.

Table 4.8 Performance Management and Evaluation Process with the Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>4.1.1. Adaptation and redefinition of objectives with the reduced working week</i>	2	2
<i>4.1.2. Competency and objective-based evaluation with the reduced working week</i>	6	6
<i>4.1.3. Feedback mechanisms and continuous evaluation with the reduced working week</i>	20	12
<i>4.1.4. Performance metrics and indicators with the reduced working week</i>	7	4
Total	35	24

As reflected in the findings, feedback mechanisms and continuous evaluation emerged as critical components, being the most mentioned aspect in this category (NO = 12). This constant feedback is very important as it allows for the personal and professional development of participants: *"On an individual level, we have a biannual meeting, we have feedback with our*

bosses, where they tell us our positive points, the points where we have to improve" (I8), and also the control of how the implementation of the RWW is going in the organizations.

Evaluation based on competencies and objectives has been widely adopted (NO = 6), indicating that organizations have come to value not only final results, but also the competencies developed by employees over the course of a RWW, as mentioned by participant 1 *"in terms of objectives, we live very much in a fast-paced and dynamic environment, and although we have outlined objectives, our performance evaluation ends up being based more on the necessary competencies than on objectives, so it ends up being easier to measure"*. Participant 13 also explains how it works in his team: *"(...) it's more or less easy because we have a set of projects each month. We have a set of analyses that the team has to guarantee on a weekly basis. So, it's easy to see if it's being delivered or not. That's basically it. It ends up being easy."*

In addition, four participants brought up the adoption of metrics and performance indicators, indicating the introduction of new instruments for evaluating employee effectiveness and productivity in this new environment. Following the introduction of the RWW, several measures were used to guarantee both quality and wellbeing. These included keeping an eye on employees' stress levels and upholding quality seals like the Healthy Seal. Another way to gauge WLB was to look at how individuals divided their time between work and personal obligations.

Lastly, with the implementation of the RWW, there was a need to adapt and redefine the objectives (NO=2), in order to ensure that they remained realistic and achievable within the reduced time available, with participant 1 pointing out that *"last year was very much a year of adaptation on all sides, in which some objectives were achieved and others not so much and so we end up being here in a phase of adaptation it seems to me..."*.

4.4.2. Talent Retention and Attraction with the Reduced Working Week

The RWW has proven to be quite successful in recruiting and keeping talent; 10 participants highlighted it 25 times; applications have increased, and turnover has significantly decreased. *"The desire to leave is much lower than it was before the model,"* said the first participant. Numerous employees recognized how hard it was to find comparable circumstances at other organizations. In addition, *"It ends up being difficult to almost leave and move to another organization, because in the other organization I'll have to work all five days"* (I20). Furthermore, professionals from other organizations have been attracted to the model, which has increased the organization's competitiveness in the labor market.

4.4.3. Changes in Absenteeism with the Reduced Working Week

Three participants noted absence four times, indicating a considerable beneficial impact of the RWW implementation in the experience of employees. As said, there was an obvious decrease in staff absenteeism during the times this model was in use. There were even months, according to one participant 6, when *"no one was missing"* (I5). *"Absences have decreased because we have this day to deal with matters"*. Consequently, the reason for the decrease in absenteeism is that employees utilize their day off to take care of personal matters, such doctor's appointments, so they don't have to skip work on other days (I8).

4.5. Concerns and Challenges arising from the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

Table 4.9 summarizes the various concerns and challenges that emerged with the implementation of the RWW.

Table 4.9 Concerns and Challenges arising from the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>5.1. Financial concerns and challenges with the reduced working week</i>	3	2
<i>5.2. Logistical and organizational concerns and challenges with the reduced working week</i>	15	7
<i>5.3. Workload and productivity concerns and challenges with the reduced working week</i>	9	7
<i>5.4. Personal concerns and challenges regarding work-life balance with the reduced working week</i>	9	5
<i>5.5. Communication and client management concerns and challenges with the reduced working week</i>	1	1
<i>5.6. Concerns and challenges in employee training and development with the reduced working week</i>	1	1
Total	38	23

Logistical and organizational concerns were raised (NO = 7). *"For me, the biggest challenge was adjusting our schedules. We have to adjust our schedules according to our colleagues' days off,"* said participant 15, pointing out that there was a need to reorganize the team's schedules and tasks to adapt to the new working hours.

There were also initial concerns about a possible increase in workload and decrease in productivity (NO = 7). Participants were afraid that they wouldn't be as productive as expected

in the new reduced timetable - *"my concern was that I would leave something hanging to do"* (I4) - and that the workload would increase - *"I was also worried that it would bring me more work, and that it would be a source of stress for me"* (I5). However, some participants showed that it was possible to maintain the same levels of productivity, and that the workload did not increase significantly (I13, for example).

In addition to these issues, five of the participants said they felt some personal concerns and challenges. These concerns were mostly based on insecurity, both on a personal level and in terms of the success of the implementation, where people didn't believe they would be able to adapt to the new model, expressing fears about how they would cope if they didn't: *"My concern was really me, because I have this difficulty. And when I make a mistake, or leave something undone, or forget something, it's very difficult for me to manage, and to accept that I did it. But that's my fault."* (I4). Participant 9 mentioned the personal fear of letting the organization down: *"(...) I felt this fear, like, well, if they get sick now, the next day it's very annoying, because I'm absent on a day when one of them is off, isn't it?"*

Financial concerns and challenges were one of the issues raised by participants in relation to the RWW (NO = 2). The 9th participant said that his organization experienced a rise in operational expenses, mostly because of the requirement to recruit additional staff members to compensate for the decrease in work hours. Participant 2 stated, *"Whether they were going to reduce our salaries or not, was also one of the concerns right away."*

Communication and customer management with the implementation of the RWW was also a concern expressed by participant 18: *"(...) I know that they know that we're not going to work that day, but it's a bit like managing the expectation that they're going to comment or they're going to send an email or they're going to try to talk to us and we're not there. (...) But on this day it's really everyone not working, so, okay, that's sometimes a bit worrying, but I think it's a question of managing."*

Finally, participant 8 expressed his concern about the training and development of the organization's employees: *"And then that would also affect the training a bit, because in the initial part we have some training (...) that could be more beneficial, for more continuous monitoring, staying five days would be better than four days."*

In short, the implementation of the RWW has brought a few challenges for organizations, but many of these concerns have been overcome through organizational adjustments and effective communication.

4.6. Consequences associated with the Reduced Working Week

4.6.1. Changes in Stress levels with the Reduced Working Week

Table 4.10 presents the changes in stress levels experienced by employees with the implementation of the RWW.

Table 4.10 Changes in Stress levels with the Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>6.1.1. Decrease in stress levels with the reduced working week</i>	19	12
<i>6.1.2. Maintenance of stress levels with the reduced working week</i>	11	9
<i>6.1.3. Increase in stress levels with the reduced working week</i>	9	5
Total	39	26

The implementation of the RWW had various effects on stress levels among employees. The majority of participants (NO = 12) reported a decrease in stress levels, "*I had that day more, I was less stressed*" (I6). Some of the participants explained that having that day to make appointments and other personal commitments reduced the stress of having to ask superiors to leave early or to miss work.

However, 9 participants mentioned that their stress levels remained unchanged, with participant 13 pointing out that "*I don't feel it's more stressful to work an extra hour on other days*".

Nevertheless, 5 participants did not have such a positive experience, reporting an increase in stress levels. However, different sources of stress were identified. Participant 4 expressed his concern because "*I didn't want to leave anything undone, I didn't want to fail anyone*", and also mentioned that "*as much as it was sometimes a bit stressful for me, because I'm not used to not doing anything*". For his part, participant 11 reported that his stress levels increased because, on his day off, he chose to have another official work activity.

4.6.2. Changes in Satisfaction levels with the Reduced Working Week

Table 4.11 illustrates the changes in satisfaction levels experienced by participants with the implementation of the RWW.

Table 4.11 Changes in Satisfaction levels with the Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>6.2.1. Increase in satisfaction levels with the reduced working week</i>	28	18
<i>6.2.2. Maintenance of satisfaction levels with the reduced working week</i>	2	2
Total	30	20

Some participants highlighted an increase in satisfaction (NO = 18). Various justifications were given for this increase: participant 6 reported that *"I was already satisfied. I think I was more satisfied with being given this opportunity, and proud of our organization for wanting to take part in a project like this (...)"*. For his part, participant 11 explained that *"it ends up increasing satisfaction, because it's another day that I'm dedicated to doing what I really want, what I really like. And in that sense, (...) I really appreciate them having that understanding too and letting me do it. So, I end up being more satisfied, in the sense that I have more time to really pursue my personal goals."*, since he uses his day off for his extra-official activities. Finally, participant 19 said that *"I was fine, I like working here, but really, being able to take your children to school without the burden of the timetable, at least once a day, dedicating a bit more, who says children, says ourselves, right? It's incredible."*

However, two of the participants reported that satisfaction levels remained constant with the implementation of the RWW - *"I've always been satisfied, by the way, I really enjoy what I do"* (I6).

4.6.3. Changes in Work-Life Balance with the Reduced Working Week

The changes in participants' WLB with the implementation of the RWW were mentioned 47 times throughout the interviews, by all the participants (20). The impact of this working model on participants' WLB was undoubtedly positive. As mentioned by participant 2, *"there is this WLB, in which all the people who respond to our barometer, me included, are satisfied, when I say satisfied it's in that sense, we manage to better reconcile this professional part, with leisure, with the personal side"*, in fact, many of the participants reported having more free time to reconcile with other personal commitments. Several examples were given, such as traveling, spending time with family and friends, doing household chores, scheduling appointments and paperwork, doing sports, among others. As participant 1 pointed out, *"I end up having a day to myself... sometimes just to rest"*, which has brought more flexibility and freedom to manage daily commitments and tasks.

4.7. Results of the Reduced Working Week

4.7.1. Changes in Productivity with the Reduced Working Week

The table 4.12 summarizes the changes in both personal and organization productivity observed with the implementation of the RWW.

Table 4.12 Changes in Productivity with the Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
7.1.1. Changes in personal productivity with the reduced working week	34	13
7.1.2. Changes in organization productivity with the reduced working week	26	14
Total	60	27

According to the results, the organization's productivity increased with the RWW (NO = 14). Participant 1 said: *"Our productivity per hour ended up being higher than when we had the 40-hour model and the 5-day week. It shows a lot about people's motivation"*. Participant 5 explains that he felt *"greater creativity, greater flexibility, greater ability to adjust, greater ability to, for example, even take on more work, take on more work, because the colleague was off, because I also have the right to time off, that is, yes, greater commitment as well (...)"*.

Thirteen participants mentioned changes in personal productivity with the implementation of the RWW. Participant 1 reported that *"our hours are much more intense than they were in the 40-hour week because you have to do the same things, so it ends up being more intense and people end up being more focused and when focused on hourly work the focus also has to increase"*. In the case of participant 13, whose number of hours per day was increased to reduce the number of hours per week, he pointed out that this extra hour per day *"sometimes even allows you to finish some analyses instead of leaving them half-finished"*. Three participants indicated that their personal productivity had been maintained.

4.7.2. Changes in Mental Health and Well-Being with the Reduced Working Week

Employees' levels of mental health and well-being underwent significant changes with the introduction of the RWW, as mentioned 35 times by 16 participants.

One of the most talked about things in the interviews was the growth of a general feeling of satisfaction and joy. Several participants said that by reducing the number of hours they worked, they experienced less tiredness, both physically and psychologically. For example, participant 3 said: *"I feel less tired, not just in my body, but mainly in my mind"*.

In addition, it is common to highlight the considerable improvement in the team's morale and motivation as another major achievement. Examples such as *"the team was quite happy"* (I5) and *"when the person returns, you clearly notice a drop in the week in terms of energy or even the way we live our days"* (I10) demonstrate this positive transformation in the working environment.

In addition, the reduction in working hours resulted in significant improvements in employees' mental health. Several participants said that this change had helped prevent mental

health issues, allowing more time for relaxation and personal activities. One participant said: *"I believe we should see this as a way of fostering mental health as a whole"* (E10), while another participant reinforced that *"from a mental health point of view, I see this as the main benefit of this initiative"* (I17).

4.7.3. Environmental Benefits associated with the Reduced Working Week

In one of the interviews (I14), the participant mentioned the environmental benefits associated with implementing a RWW: *"(...) it's fewer people, it's one or two days less a month that people will need, they won't need to go to work, even in carbon emissions on the greener perimeter it will have a positive impact and so I think everyone wins"*. This observation highlights that the implementation of the RWW contributes to environmental sustainability, reducing the carbon footprint and promoting greener practices.

4.7.4. Changes in the use of Free Time with the Reduced Working Week

The table 4.13 outlines the changes in the use of free time that employees experienced with the implementation of the RWW.

Table 4.13 *Changes in the use of Free Time with the Reduced Working Week*

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>7.4.1. Official extra activity with the reduced working week</i>	2	1
<i>7.4.2. Non-official extra activity with the reduced working week</i>	3	2
Total	5	3

Within the scenario of the implementation of the RWW, the use of free time for unofficial activities was also mentioned (NO = 2). Some participants decided to continue working beyond their usual hours to balance their personal and professional responsibilities. One participant (I6) said: *"on some occasions, when I know I have a guaranteed day off, I choose to work at weekends"*; another participant mentioned that some people take advantage of their free time to carry out professional activities (I7).

On the other hand, different ways of using free time were observed on the part of employees. Taking academic development as an example, some participants mentioned that they used this time for official activities. For example, participant 11 pointed out that the reduction in the working week allowed him to *"dedicate himself to his PhD with more freedom,"* thus highlighting the positive benefits of professional development through academic studies. In addition, the participant stressed the importance of taking advantage of

free time to hold meetings and get involved in activities related to his role as a teaching assistant.

Although the examples mentioned point out that a week with fewer working hours provides more free time, some participants still decide to use this extra time to dedicate to additional work, either out of obligation or their own choice.

4.7.5. Changes in the Quality of Work Performed with the Reduced Working Week

The implementation of the RWW seems to have had a positive impact on the quality of the work carried out, according to the accounts in interview 7, where the participant mentioned that, with the new organization of work, *"the margin for error has reduced our normal errors,"* exemplifying how a sensitive task prone to errors due to human fatigue was carried out with greater precision. This observation suggests that the reduction in working time may be associated with an improvement in the quality of operations.

4.8. Decision Factors in staying with a Reduced Working Week

4.8.1. Personal Priorities for staying with a Reduced Working Week

The following table outlines the personal priorities for staying with a RWW, highlighting the emphasis placed on the value of free time, salary, and other individual preferences.

Table 4.14 Personal priorities for staying with a Reduced Working Week

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>8.1.1. Value of free time with the reduced working week</i>	19	11
<i>8.1.2. Value of salary with the reduced working week</i>	19	14
<i>8.1.3. Other personal priorities with the reduced working week</i>	2	2
Total	40	27

After analyzing the findings, we identified two main priorities for participants when it comes to staying in a RWW: free time and the value of the salary.

The value of the salary was highly emphasized (NO = 14). As participant 5 explains: *"If I had to choose, I'd still choose to work Monday to Friday and keep the same salary. After all, we're a low-wage country, where the average person earns a thousand euros (...) We already earn very little, it doesn't make sense to work less to earn less."* However, as one participant said: *"No cuts, but to go up or stay the same, well, I'd rather lose the day off. With great regret,"*, reflecting a common feeling that maintaining the salary was essential for continued support of the reduced working week.

On the other hand, participants who valued their free time (NO = 11) often used expressions such as *"time is money!"* (I11) and *"time is worth a lot to me"* (I17). However, some of the participants explained that if free time meant a reduction in salary, it would depend on *"(...) how much lower, right?"* (I17), highlighting the fact that salaries in Portugal are already mostly low. Participant 5 clarifies that *"(...) it depends, I think the assistants (...) would prefer it, but they wouldn't be able to do it, that's different"*.

Although these two factors were predominant, two of the participants mentioned other personal priorities. Participant 1 gave importance to the fact that the organization was closer to where he lived, saving time on transportation: *"when I came, it didn't bother me that I didn't have the salary upgrade, I came for the same money, but I was going to gain (...) quality of life, I wasn't going to waste time on transportation, I went from waking up at 6 in the morning, to waking up at 8 and working at 9, that's 2 hours in a day (...)"*.

Participant 18 explained that the organization's culture played a fundamental role in his choice: *"Imagine that the day off is not a startup and most of the people are 50 years old. And maybe organization culture isn't my thing either, the projects aren't either, so maybe I'd always prefer the one that doesn't have the day off, knowing that it has a cooler culture."*

4.9. Recommendations regarding the Reduced Working Week

Table 4.15 presents the key recommendations for the implementation and continuation of the RWW, based on the NM each sub-theme received from participants.

Table 4.15 *Recommendations regarding the Reduced Working Week*

Sub-themes	NM	NO
<i>9.1. Maintenance and expansion of the reduced working week</i>	20	11
<i>9.2. Gradual and flexible implementation of the reduced working week</i>	12	9
<i>9.3. Consultation and involvement of employees in the reduced working week</i>	10	9
<i>9.4. Efficient organization and management with the reduced working week</i>	8	7
<i>9.5. Team culture and trust with the reduced working week</i>	3	3
Total	53	39

An analysis of the recommendations provided by participants on the RWW revealed a few different suggestions. The most frequently mentioned recommendation was from participants who wanted the RWW to be maintained or extended to other organizations and sectors (NO = 11). Many of the participants said things like *"I hope it has results and is implemented in more organizations, because this is really beneficial"* (I2) and *"I think this should be implemented throughout Portugal. Everyone should be entitled to the 4-day week"* (I15).

Another relevant recommendation was the gradual and flexible implementation of the RWW (NO = 9). Participants suggested that to avoid resistance and maximize the benefits, the implementation of the RWW should be done gradually, allowing for adjustments as necessary. Suggestions were made such as "(...) *it might be better to start with a more rotating option, that is, to have months in which this happens, for example in the summer months to make it happen, because it's easier to imagine, and this is a bit of an opinion of mine: the 4-day model costs more in winter because it seems like you spend the day working, as the days are short, it seems like you spend the day working that you almost come in at night and leave at night, you end up not having as much sunlight and when you leave work in the summer it ends up being super ok because you still have a lot of daylight to enjoy. (...) Maybe start in the summer to see if people get used to it, if it makes sense or not (...)*" (I1) and "(...) *I was going to do this survey of tasks that the departments were doing and then test it, first with one team, then with another and compare, do that test and then extend it to the whole organization*" (I8). Participant 1 suggested that adherence should be optional and explained that "*if you force it to happen, it's much worse and people will be much more resistant to a change that is mandatory than to a change that is optional*". Some participants also mentioned the advantage of having a test period that is reversible: "*because I think that, for example, for me, as management, it took a lot of weight off, if it didn't go well, because there was this pilot project thing, if it didn't go well, I could always go back*" (I5). In addition, they also recommended that it should be rotating: "*it could be a bit rotating, i.e. I, for example, have the day on Friday, but if you work here you have the day on Monday, for example, another colleague would have it, even if he didn't want to have it in the middle of the week, i.e. part of the employees on Monday, part of the employees on Friday, so that the organization would actually work all five days, because customers come here from Monday to Friday*" (I11) and that there should be a system of exchanges: "*instead of always having it on Friday, you could... I don't know, some kind of plan that worked either by department or by month, for example, two or three exchanges you could make per month, a kind of budget of exchanges you could make*" (I18).

In addition, 9 participants mentioned employee consultation and involvement in the RWW, highlighting the importance of including employees in the decision-making process and adjusting the model to the needs of each team. Participant 6 commented that he thinks "*it's about listening a lot to what the employees have to say. Because (...) it's important to understand what's going well, what's going wrong, maybe the boss doesn't see (...)*".

Efficient organization and management during the RWW were also highlighted by the participants (NO = 7), stressing that for the RWW to be successful, careful planning and

effective management of the tasks and resources available is necessary. Participant 5 pointed out that it is important *"to realize (...) that what went well here may not go well elsewhere, and therefore to be open and a bit flexible in creating your own solutions"*. One of the points that, according to participant 8, should be adapted is recruitment: *"I think recruitment would also be a bit of a function of this, because maybe there are younger people who are more open to this type of week, there are older people who are already very used to this model, I don't know if they would adapt, because they already have that very defined work rhythm for the five days"*. Participant 11 also suggests that: *"And so I think it would be an option, it would be for organizations to extend this to all employees, to create this strategy of being rotational, that is, and of there being no overlapping of duties. If it's just the two of us who know how to do a certain job, then you'd stay at home on Fridays and I'd stay at home on Mondays, so that the job wouldn't be disrupted because we're on a short week"*. Basically, *"the advice I'd give is team spirit, communication, without a doubt, and a great deal of flexibility so that everything runs smoothly. And a good leader, a good boss, I think they also make their team."* (I15)

Finally, the culture and trust in the team was mentioned by 3 participants as being a crucial aspect for the successful implementation of the RWW: *"I think the first thing is to have team spirit, to be very united, because at first impact it's not easy to coordinate everything"* (I15).

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Reduced Working Week Policy

The concept of reducing the number of working hours while maintaining the same pay is widely supported for its potential to increase employees' well-being. The results of this study are in line with this, since one of the main objectives of organizations when implementing this new working model was to improve employees' satisfaction and quality of life.

However, the implementation processes and models varied. Regarding time off, while some organizations opted to fix the day off, others, due to operational needs, had to adopt a rotating model. The literature suggests that taking into account both the needs of the business and the personal needs of employees is crucial to the successful implementation of a Reduced Working Week (RWW) (Hyatt & Coslor, 2018). The results of this study corroborate the conclusion of Hyatt and Coslor (2018), where several participants highlighted that taking employees' needs into account and including them in the implementation process was an important factor.

Many of the participating organizations adopted the RWW model as part of a six-month PPP. This PPP, led by the Portuguese government, followed fundamental principles, such as no reduction in wages, voluntary participation by organizations and the freedom to choose different forms.

5.2. Expectations and Preferences regarding the Reduced Working Week

Employees have different expectations, both positive and negative, of the RWW model. Some studies show that participants feel initial optimism and are enthusiastic about the possibility of improving their Work-Life Balance (WLB) without any reduction in pay. For example, Li and Wang (2022) state that initiatives such as a RWW, which facilitate work-life balance, are associated with improved employee satisfaction, and the results of the present study are consistent with these conclusions.

On the other hand, the literature also identifies negative expectations of RWW. For instance, it mentions that many employees fear an increase in work intensity and workload, especially if productivity expectations are not adjusted proportionally. In addition, uncertainty about possible pay cuts is a recurring theme in studies on the adoption of new working models, as pointed out by Ko, Hur and Smith-Walter (2013).

The findings collected were surprising, with more negative than positive expectations from the participants. These results, however, are not in line with the results of the PPP. In the project,

most employees recognized clear benefits in terms of well-being, quality of life and flexibility, although they also expressed negative expectations regarding workload and logistics. The findings of the present study can be explained by the concerns already documented by Delaney and Casey (2022), who mention a possible increase in work intensity and workload.

The participants from this study who had positive expectations were enthusiastic and confident about the implementation of a RWW, perceiving that this model could guarantee them more free time and, consequently, a better quality of life. On the other hand, the participants who expressed negative expectations mentioned an increase in workload and the loss of benefits, such as lower pay or fewer vacation days. The results of the study are therefore in line with the existing literature.

Preferences regarding the structure of the RWW also varied. McNall et al. (2009) point out that many employees prefer a fixed-leave model, highlighting the predictability and ease of organization that this format offers. The autonomy and flexibility provided by the RWW are seen by participants as essential factors in ensuring the satisfaction and success of the model.

5.3. Changes in the organization with the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

The implementation of the RWW, as suggested by previous literature, was found to bring countless changes to organizations. One of the most significant changes organizations had to introduce was reorganizing working hours and workloads. This shift may require teams to work more synchronously, as noted by Hyatt and Coslor (2018), to avoid overwhelming employees. Results from the study showed participants expressing the need to reschedule meetings and, in some cases, work extra hours to make up for time off. Although some participants reported a need to reorganize work, the findings did not indicate a significant increase in workload. However, this contrasts with Delaney and Casey's (2022) observation that, in some cases, RWW may lead to work intensification and increased workload.

The literature also highlights, as Delaney and Casey (2022) point out, the importance of clear and ongoing communication with employees and clients during the RWW implementation. Several participants highlighted that effective communication is vital, a fact confirmed by the research data.

According to Ferdous et al. (2020), employee flexibility is also a critical factor in adapting to the new reality of the RWW. The study data supported this, with many participants highlighting how they valued and saw as beneficial the flexibility to adjust their working hours and swap days off with colleagues, helping them better balance personal and professional needs.

In addition, and in agreement, most of the organizations participating in the PPP have made organizational changes. A reduction in meeting times and the acquisition of new management programs were reported.

5.4. Human Resources Practices and Strategies in the Reduced Working Week

For a successful implementation of the RWW, it is essential that organizations adapt their human resources practices and strategies. According to the results of this study, the evaluation and performance management processes were adjusted based on competencies and objectives, in line with what was proposed by Delaney and Casey (2022), who suggested redefining performance metrics and indicators in new work models.

In addition, the results of this study confirm the importance of a continuous feedback mechanism, as suggested by Hamermesh and Biddle (2023), who highlight its relevance to the sustainability of new working models, such as the RWW. The participants agreed that the RWW offers a competitive advantage for organizations, as it increases the attraction of professionals. This is in line with the idea of Ferdous et al. (2020), who argue that the more flexible the work environment, the greater the employee satisfaction, which contributes to their retention, rather than increasing turnover.

Despite the stress caused by poor workload management, flexibility in adhering to the RWW was seen as a major factor in the success of this format. The participants in this research mentioned the importance of flexibility in relation to this model, in line with Hyatt and Coslor (2018), who say that autonomy is necessary to control work routines. Kwon and Kim-Goh (2023) emphasize the same argument, as they highlight happiness and the balance between life and work, as established in the research on the RWW. Ultimately, the changes in work dynamics, communication and organizational structure are the result of cultural changes associated with the RWW model. This is what Suter and Kowalski (2021) point out, arguing for the importance of effective communication in RWW. Therefore, despite the obvious benefits for production and well-being, its implementation must be careful, as the workload must be managed, and members need to anticipate ongoing support.

From the point of view of human resources, the importance of continuous feedback and adapting objectives was emphasized by both the present study and the results of the PPP. The results of the PPP considered crucial to redefine productivity metrics and actively include employees in the process of readjusting them.

5.5. Concerns and Challenges arising from the Implementation of the Reduced Working Week

Many participants also mentioned logistical and organizational challenges related to the implementation of the RWW, which was confirmed in prior literature. However, Delaney and Casey (2022) point out that a consequence of the provision without previous planning can lead to coordination issues within teams. In terms of productivity, some participants expressed concerns that it would diminish - these concerns are in line with the observations of Campbell (2024), who states that the four-day working week can increase productivity, but if poorly managed, it can generate negative results. Although some participants did not report a significant increase in workload, others expressed concerns about potential work intensification. This is consistent with concerns raised in the literature (Ferdous et al., 2020), which highlights that when the workload remains the same, or even increases, employees can feel overwhelmed and stressed.

Another issue that came up in some organizations was economical concerns of hiring more staff members, as reported by Veal (2023).

In the PPP, organizations reported challenges related to customer involvement, resistance to change, and the need for organizational adaptation.

5.6. Consequences associated with the Reduced Working Week

For organizations, the implementation of a RWW has also had its own consequences. In terms of stress levels, the literature addresses a decrease in pressure because these employees improved their professional and personal balance (Delaney & Casey, 2022). The majority of participants reported a reduction in stress, which is in line with the literature by Delaney and Casey (2022), who discuss the reduction in pressure due to the improvement in WLB provided by RWW.

Nevertheless, as Brown and Pitt-Catsoupes (2016) noted, stress might rise in some circumstances if the workload is not reduced proportionally, a concern similarly raised by some participants in this study. Regarding employee satisfaction, the findings of this study align with those of Li and Wang (2022), who reported that the RWW increases job satisfaction levels. Similarly, most respondents in this research emphasized that having more time for personal activities was critical in enhancing their job satisfaction. The results of the PPP further confirmed this tendency, with most employees reporting improvements in both their mental health and overall job satisfaction.

Previous literature, including Ferdous et al. (2020), highlights the improvement in WLB, as confirmed by the participants in this study.

The literature indicates that productivity per hour increased (Hyatt & Coslor, 2018), a finding that aligns with the results of this study, as participants self-reported greater concentration and improved workflow.

5.7. Results of the Reduced Working Week

In general, the present study on the RWW shows that, similar to previous literature, it has several positive results, such as improving productivity, mental health and work-life balance for employees. This also aligns with the findings of Delaney and Casey (2022), as participants reported better concentration in their work, finding that maintaining concentration helped increase efficiency with reduced working hours. The results of the PPP corroborated these findings, noting that most organizations reported an increase in productivity per hour, despite a reduction in the total number of hours worked.

Participants also reported better mental health, and their physical and mental fatigue improved, aligning with Ferdous et al. (2020). In addition, in line with Suter and Kowalski (2021), many participants cited a better WLB, feeling they had more time for personal obligations.

5.8. Decision Factors in staying in a Reduced Working Week

Employees' decision to stay in a RWW is determined by two key factors: valuing free time and maintaining their wages. One of the main advantages mentioned by participants in this study was more free time in general. Moreover, opportunities to participate in recreational activities that improve quality of life outside of work made this package particularly attractive. This argument is also echoed in the literature by Ferdous et al. (2020), who stress the importance of the WLB provided by RWWs.

However, remuneration was considered a crucial issue. This provides a clear picture that working fewer hours for a lower-than-market salary doesn't seem that appealing and highlights the need to maintain income. This is confirmed by the research of Lewis and Humbert (2010), according to which reducing the working week is only successful if there is no negative impact on employees' financial conditions. In the PPP, all salaries were kept.

5.9. Recommendations regarding the Reduced Working Week

Several recommendations were proposed by the participants for the continuity and success of the RWW. They suggested that organizations should continue prioritizing employees' well-being and remain flexible when implementing a RWW. Based on Delaney and Casey (2022), the RWW can only work if organizations are willing to reassess their productivity expectations, as well as respond quickly to criticism and feedback from employees, which ensures that the necessary changes are made in a timely manner.

In this study, it was suggested that this continuous adaptation, coupled with a clear communication policy, both internally and with customers, is key to ensuring that the model works effectively. This conclusion is supported by Hyatt and Coslor (2018) who indicate that all stakeholders, including customers, should be informed of changes for a smooth and successful implementation.

Similarly, the results of the PPP highlighted the importance of adapting the model to the reality of each organization, recommending open communication between leaders and employees.

5.10. Limitations and Future Research

Despite the qualitative methodology adopted in the present study providing valuable insights, there are some limitations to be considered. The qualitative data resulting from this methodology are more difficult to analyze and interpret.

The sample size was limited, which restricts the generalization of the results. The number of male participants was also considerably lower than the number of female participants. Future studies could benefit from larger, more heterogeneous, and diverse samples to explore contextual differences in greater depth.

Another limiting factor was the findings collection method. Some of the semi-structured interviews were conducted virtually, via Zoom, which may have compromised the ability to read important non-verbal cues for analysis. Although this factor may offer advantages, such as making participants feel more uninhibited, future research should consider conducting in-person interviews or combining virtual and in-person methods to gain a better understanding of participant behavior.

Moreover, the variables explored in this study were primarily focused on qualitative and, consequently, more subjective perceptions. Future research could adopt mixed approaches,

combining qualitative and quantitative methods, to validate and expand upon the results obtained. It would also be interesting to study differences between specific sectors of activity.

Finally, another limitation of this study is the fact that the coding was not validated by an independent researcher, although it was validated by the study's supervising professors. The results were also not exposed to the participants for validation. Therefore, it is suggested that future research consider the possibility of external validation of both the results and the coding to ensure the highest possible reliability of the findings.

5.11. Practical Implications

Organizations can derive useful practical implications from the findings of this study. First, advocating the RWW may turn out to be an excellent approach toward improving the well-being and job satisfaction of employees. With a RWW, employees experienced less stress on account of reduced hours of work, enabling them to balance their family commitments with job demands. It implies that providing work patterns that can satisfy the needs of the employees will most likely encourage them and improve their performance.

Among all these, the RWW also brings in job satisfaction as it gives employees extra time for personal and leisure activities. But for this model to actually attain its full potential, the organization needs first to ensure clear communication and proper planning during its initiation process. In other words, it means establishing achievable performance expectations for the new working system and making sure that employees are not strained workwise, since such could nullify the advantages brought in by reduced working hours.

This new work model can even be used as a competitive advantage in talent recruiting and retention, particularly in industries that demand highly emotional and physical investment, or in industries with high turnover, for example. When providing a WLB environment, organizations are more likely to gain improved employee loyalty and commitment that leads to reduced turnover and absenteeism rates and, of course, lower hiring and training costs.

For the successful implementation of a RWW, organizations must focus on time management policies efficiently, support employees during the transition process, and continuously monitor the impact of this change on employees' stress and job satisfaction levels.

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Annexes

Annexe A – Research Participants Sociodemographic Data

It is noteworthy that some abbreviations were used for the table to be readable. I point out that the size of the organization is in number of employees.

I	Age	Gender	Level of Education	Function	Organization Sector	Organization Size	Years of Service	Tenure	Hours/ Week	Days/ Week	Hours/ Day	Remote Work	IT
1	25	Female	Bachelor	Product Designer	Design	200	3y	2y	40 in one week, 32 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	8	Yes	2y
2	27	Male	Bachelor	Programmer	Technology	200	4y	3y	40 in one week, 32 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	8	Yes	2y
3	31	Female	Master	Team Leader of a Digital Marketing team	Marketing	200-300	7,5y	7y and 6m	36	4	9	Yes	1y and 6m
4	24	Male	Master	Paid Search analyst	Marketing	200	1y and 3m	1y and 3m	36	4	9	Yes	1y and 6m
5	34	Male	Master	Growth Manager	Marketing	200-250	10y	7y	36	4	9	Yes	1y and 6m
6	25	Female	Bachelor	Accountant	Financial	13	5y	5y	32	4	8	No	1y
7	24	Female	Bachelor	Marketing Data Analyst	Marketing	200	2y and 6m	2y and 6m	36	4	9	Yes	1y and 6m
8	27	Female	Master	Product Designer	Technology	200	5y and 6m	2y and 3m	40 in one week, 32 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	8	Yes	2y and 6m
9	29	Female	Basic education	Recruitment Team Leader and Development Human Resources	Marketing	200-250	8y	5y and 4m	36	4	9	Yes	1y and 6m
10	39	Female	Bachelor	Educational Assistant	Education	22	17y	10y	37,5 in one week, 30 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	7,5	No	1y
11	41	Female	High School	Pre-School Teacher	Education	23	17y	10y	40 in one week, 32 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	8	No	1y
12	44	Female	High School	Educational Assistant	Education	23	26y	9y	37,5 in one week, 30 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	7,5	No	1y

I	Age	Gender	Level of Education	Function	Organization Sector	Organization Size	Years of Service	Tenure	Hours/ Week	Days/ Week	Hours/ Day	Remote Work	IT
13	42	Female	High School	Educational Assistant	Education	22	17y	10y	37,5 in one week, 30 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	7,5	No	1y
14	49	Female	Master	Educational Assistant	Education	23	30y	9y	37,5 in one week, 30 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	7,5	No	1y
15	35	Female	Bachelor	Pre-School Teacher	Education	23	10y	10y	35 in one week, 28 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	7	No	1y
16	37	Female	High School	Pre-School Teacher	Education	23	12y	5y and 6m	35 in one week, 28 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	7	No	1y
17	33	Female	High School	Educational Assistant	Education	22	12y	5y	37,5 in one week, 30 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	7,5	No	1y
18	25	Female	Bachelor	Educational Assistant	Education	23	6y and 1m	6y	37,5 in one week, 30 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	7,5	No	1y
19	43	Female	Master	Technical and Pedagogical Director	Education	22	12y	10y	35 in one week, 28 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	7	Yes	1y
20	51	Female	Master	Executive Director	Education	22	12y	10y	35 in one week, 28 in another	4 in one week, 5 in another	7	Yes	1y

I – Interviewed; y - year(s); m - month(s); IT – Implementation Time

Annexe B – Interview script

Introdução

Bom dia/tarde/noite. O meu nome é Mariana Batalha e estou, de momento, a desenvolver a minha tese de mestrado em Gestão na ISCTE Business School.

Para esse propósito, gostaria de realizar uma entrevista semiestruturada, sendo que pretendo que seja honesto/a e partilhe a sua opinião sobre os tópicos abordados na mesma. Gostaria de salientar que, nesta entrevista mais aprofundada, não existem respostas certas nem erradas.

O objetivo desta entrevista é investigar e compreender os impactos da implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida nos trabalhadores e nas organizações.

Para garantir uma análise precisa dos dados fornecidos, gostaria de solicitar a sua permissão para gravar apenas o áudio desta entrevista. No entanto, tem o direito de negar essa possibilidade, se desejar. Quero assegurar-lhe que todas as suas respostas serão tratadas com total confidencialidade. Enviei, posteriormente, um formulário de consentimento por e-mail para que possa revisar e assinar. Tem alguma dúvida antes de começarmos?

Enquadramento sociodemográfico

Antes de iniciar as questões da entrevista, pretendo colocar algumas perguntas diretas para obter um enquadramento sociodemográfico dos participantes. O objetivo desta abordagem é obter informações que posteriormente nos ajudarão a guiar a entrevista de forma mais eficiente.

1. Há quanto tempo trabalha, e qual a sua antiguidade nesta empresa?
2. Quantas horas por semana trabalha? E fragmentadas em quantos dias?
3. Tem dias de teletrabalho?

Processo de planeamento da experiência

1. Pode-nos falar sobre a política da sua organização em torno da semana de trabalho reduzida?
 - Há quanto tempo foi implementada a semana de trabalho reduzida na sua empresa?
 - Como foi implementada a semana de trabalho reduzida na sua empresa?

- Teve a oportunidade de escolher se queria ou não participar na semana de trabalho reduzida?
 - Houve alguma margem de escolha nas especificidades da implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida?
 - Se não trabalha num dos dias da semana, esse dia é fixo?
2. Quais são os seus pensamentos e opiniões sobre a semana de trabalho reduzida?
 3. Que mudanças ocorreram na empresa desde a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida? Pode dar exemplos específicos de algumas dessas mudanças? Além disso, houve outras mudanças além das que mencionou até agora?
 - Houve uma redução na carga de trabalho ou corte salarial? → *apenas se o participante não tiver mencionado este aspeto até ao momento.*
 4. Qual foi o processo para gerir e avaliar o desempenho?
 - Como foram estabelecidos os objetivos ou Indicadores-Chave de Desempenho (KPIs) como parte do processo de gestão e avaliação do desempenho?

Experiência

5. Quais foram alguns dos desafios ou preocupações que encontrou no momento de implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida? → *se a implementação tiver sido efetuada há algum tempo (mais de 1 mês)*
 Quais têm sido alguns dos desafios ou preocupações que encontrou desde o início da implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida? → *se a implementação tiver sido efetuada há pouco tempo (menos de 1 mês).*
6. Como se sentiu em relação ao seu trabalho durante a experiência?
 - Pode descrever quaisquer mudanças nos seus níveis de stress desde a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida o porquê das mesmas?
 - Como é que a sua satisfação geral no trabalho foi influenciada pela semana de trabalho reduzida e porquê?
7. Como é que o trabalho remoto afetou a sua capacidade de equilibrar as suas responsabilidades profissionais e pessoais no contexto da semana de trabalho reduzida? E porquê? → *apenas para aqueles que responderam sim à questão sobre trabalho remoto na secção sociodemográfica.*

Reflexões pós-experiência

8. Na sua opinião, quais foram os resultados ao experimentar uma semana de trabalho reduzida, tanto para si próprio como para a empresa onde trabalha? → question removed after pilot interviews
9. Agora que já passou algum tempo desde a implementação, como avalia a experiência de uma semana de trabalho reduzida?
 - Na sua opinião, teve benefícios para si e para a empresa?
 - Na sua opinião, ajudou a melhorar o equilíbrio entre trabalho e vida pessoal? → *apenas se o participante não tiver mencionado este aspeto até ao momento.*
 - Considera que foi benéfico para aumentar o tempo pessoal? → *apenas se o participante não tiver mencionado este aspeto até ao momento.*
10. Quais são os principais fatores que influenciam a sua decisão de optar por uma semana de trabalho reduzida? → question removed after pilot interviews
11. Até que ponto considera relevante ou prioritário dispor de um maior tempo livre?
Estaria disposto(a) a aceitar um salário mais baixo em troca de mais tempo livre?

Conclusão

12. Tem alguma sugestão para otimizar futuras implementações das iniciativas de semana de trabalho reduzida?
13. Antes de concluirmos, gostaria de lhe oferecer a oportunidade de adicionar qualquer informação adicional que considere relevante.

Agradecimentos

Muito obrigado pela vossa ajuda e participação. Adicionalmente, se estiver interessada em acompanhar o meu estudo, por favor diga-me, e eu adoraria enviar-lhe os resultados por e-mail assim que estiverem disponíveis. Mais uma vez, obrigada pelo vosso tempo e disponibilidade. Foi um prazer. Desejo-vos um dia maravilhoso.

Annexe C – Informed consent

O presente estudo surge no âmbito de uma dissertação de mestrado em Gestão que está a ser realizada no ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa. A investigação que tencionamos elaborar remete para o impacto da semana de trabalho reduzida no nível de stress e na satisfação dos trabalhadores.

Este estudo está a ser conduzido por Mariana Batalha (mbaaa4@iscte-iul.pt), sob a orientação da Professora Doutora Sílvia Agostinho da Silva. Não hesite em contactar-nos se tiver alguma dúvida ou desejar partilhar algum comentário.

Agradecemos muito a sua participação, que será altamente valorizada. Essa mesma participação consistirá em partilhar um pouco da sua experiência com a semana de trabalho reduzida e pode durar entre 30 a 45 minutos. Não há riscos significativos esperados associados à sua participação neste estudo. Embora possa não obter benefícios diretos imediatos da participação, os resultados irão melhorar a nossa compreensão dos acordos de semana de trabalho reduzido e ajudar as organizações a desenvolver métodos para melhorar o bem-estar e a satisfação dos trabalhadores.

Será feita a gravação e transcrição da entrevista para garantir a recolha de dados exatos. Contudo, tem o direito de opor-se a que a entrevista seja gravada, permitindo apenas a recolha de notas.

A participação neste estudo é estritamente voluntária: pode escolher participar ou não participar. Se escolher participar, pode interromper a participação em qualquer momento sem ter de prestar qualquer justificação. Uma vez que a realização deste estudo é de carácter voluntário, não terá qualquer custo ou recompensa associada.

A sua participação neste estudo é, também, anónima e confidencial. Isso implica que qualquer registo escrito da entrevista (transcrição ou notas) não incluirá qualquer informação que possa identificá-lo/a ou revelar a organização onde trabalha.

Caso autorize a gravação, esta será guardada até à finalização da transcrição e destruída após este período. O tratamento confidencial significa que o acesso aos dados é reservado à equipa de investigação. Em nenhum momento do estudo precisa de se identificar. Face a estas informações, por favor indique se aceita participar no estudo:

ACEITO ☐ NÃO ACEITO ☐

Nome: _____

Data: _____

Assinatura: _____

Annexe D - Sociodemographic questionnaire

1. Qual é a sua idade?
2. Qual é o seu sexo?
3. Qual é a sua nacionalidade?
4. Qual é o seu estado civil?
5. Tem filhos? Em caso afirmativo, quantos e quais as idades deles?
6. Possui alguma responsabilidade de cuidar de familiares, como pais idosos ou membros da família com necessidades especiais?
7. Tem outro emprego ou compromisso significativo fora do trabalho?
8. Com que frequência pratica atividades de relaxamento ou lazer fora do trabalho?
9. Qual é o seu tipo de contrato?
10. Quais são as suas habilitações académicas?
11. Qual é a dimensão da sua empresa, quantos empregados tem?
12. Qual é a principal área de atividade da sua empresa?
13. Qual é a sua posição atual na empresa?
14. Tem responsabilidades de chefia? Se sim, quais?
15. Qual é a sua antiguidade na função?
16. Qual é o seu setor da empresa?

Annexe E – Pre-defined Codebook

1. Política da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 1.1.Estratégia da empresa com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 1.2.Tempo de implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 1.3.Processo de implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 1.4.Flexibilidade na implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
2. Expectativas relativamente à semana de trabalho reduzida
3. Mudanças na empresa com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 3.1.Mudanças na carga de trabalho com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 3.2.Mudanças no salário com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 3.3.Mudanças nos custos para a empresa com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 3.4.Mudanças na cultura organizacional com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 3.5.Mudanças associadas ao trabalho remoto com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 3.6.Outras mudanças
4. Práticas e estratégias de recursos humanos na semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 4.1.Processo de gestão e avaliação de desempenho com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 4.2.Retenção e atração de talentos com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 4.3.Outras mudanças nas práticas e estratégias de recursos humanos com a semana de trabalho reduzida
5. Desafios que surgiram com a semana de trabalho reduzida
6. Preocupações que surgiram com a semana de trabalho reduzida
7. Consequências associadas à semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 7.1.Alterações nos níveis de stress com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 7.2.Alterações nos níveis de satisfação com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 7.3.Alterações no equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e pessoal com a semana de trabalho reduzida
8. Resultados da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 8.1.Alterações na produtividade com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 8.1.1. Alterações na produtividade pessoal com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 8.1.2. Alterações na produtividade da empresa com a semana de trabalho reduzida

8.2.Alterações na saúde mental e bem-estar com a semana de trabalho reduzida

8.3.Benefícios ambientais associados à semana de trabalho reduzida

9. Fatores de decisão em permanecer numa semana de trabalho reduzida

9.1.Prioridades pessoais para permanecer numa semana de trabalho reduzida

Annexe F – Final Codebook

1. Política da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 1.1. Tempo de implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 1.2. Processo de implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 1.2.1. *Fase piloto na implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.2.2. *Modelos de folga na implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.2.3. *Comunicação na implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.2.4. *Apoio durante a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.3. Estratégia da empresa com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 1.3.1. *Bem-estar e qualidade de vida dos trabalhadores com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.3.2. *Impacto no cliente dos serviços ou bens com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.3.3. *Inovação e parcerias com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.3.4. *Manutenção e crescimento da produtividade com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.3.5. *Equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e pessoal com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.4. Flexibilidade na implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 1.4.1. *Opção de adesão à semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.4.2. *Adesão obrigatória à semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.4.3. *Modelo de folgas fixas com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.4.4. *Modelo de folgas rotativas com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.4.5. *Trocas de dias de folgas com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 1.4.6. *Flexibilidade horária com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
2. Expectativas e preferências com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 2.1. Expectativas positivas relativamente à semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 2.1.1. *Reações emocionais positivas relativamente à semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 2.1.2. *Percepção de benefícios com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 2.1.3. *Confiança na implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 2.2. Expectativas negativas relativamente à semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 2.2.1. *Impacto no bem-estar e na saúde mental com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 2.2.2. *Aumento na carga de trabalho com a semana de trabalho reduzida*

- 2.2.3. *Impacto na gestão de tarefas e responsabilidades com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 2.2.4. *Cortes salariais com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 2.2.5. *Cortes nos benefícios e férias com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 2.2.6. *Receio de reações externas com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 2.2.7. *Receio relativamente à viabilidade logística da semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 2.3. *Preferências relativamente à semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 2.3.1. *Preferência por folgas fixas na semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 2.3.2. *Preferência por modelos alternativos de folga com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 2.3.3. *Preferência por dias inteiros de folga na semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 3. *Mudanças na empresa com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.1. *Mudanças na carga de trabalho com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.1.1. *Modificações no horário de trabalho com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.1.2. *Necessidade de trabalho extra-horas com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.1.3. *Ausência de sobrecarga de trabalho com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.1.4. *Presença de sobrecarga de trabalho com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.2. *Mudanças no salário com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.2.1. *Preservação do salário com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.3. *Mudanças nos custos para a empresa com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.3.1. *Aumento dos custos com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.4. *Mudanças na satisfação do cliente dos serviços ou bens com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.4.1. *Feedback e adaptação positiva do cliente dos serviços ou bens com a implementação da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 3.5. *Mudanças na estrutura e organização das empresas com a semana de trabalho reduzida*

- 3.5.1. *Adaptação e organização com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 3.5.2. *Comunicação e colaboração com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 3.5.3. *Compromisso e flexibilidade dos colaboradores com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 3.5.4. *Planeamento e gestão de tempo com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 3.5.5. *Impacto na dinâmica de trabalho da semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 3.5.6. *Utilização de ferramentas e recursos com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 3.6. Mudanças associadas ao trabalho remoto
 - 3.6.1. *Sucesso da semana de trabalho reduzida associada ao trabalho remoto*
 - 3.6.2. *Redução do número de escritórios com o trabalho remoto*
 - 3.6.3. *Subsídio de trabalho remoto*
 - 3.6.4. *Suporte e adequação dos equipamentos e práticas com o trabalho remoto*
 - 3.6.5. *Flexibilidade e produtividade com o trabalho remoto*
 - 3.6.6. *Aumento do equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e pessoal com o trabalho remoto*
 - 3.6.7. *Diminuição do equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e pessoal com o trabalho remoto*
 - 3.6.8. *Alterações nas interações sociais com o trabalho remoto*
- 4. Práticas e estratégias de recursos humanos na semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 4.1. Processo de gestão e avaliação de desempenho com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 4.1.1. *Adaptação e redefinição dos objetivos com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 4.1.2. *Avaliação baseada em competências e objetivos com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 4.1.3. *Mecanismos de feedback e avaliação contínua com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 4.1.4. *Métricas e indicadores de desempenho com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 4.2. Retenção e atração de talentos com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 4.3. Alterações no absentismo com a semana de trabalho reduzida
- 5. Preocupações e desafios que surgiram com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 5.1. *Preocupações e desafios financeiros com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 5.2. *Preocupações e desafios com a logística e organização com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 5.3. *Preocupações e desafios com a carga de trabalho e produtividade com a semana de trabalho reduzida*

- 5.4. *Preocupações e desafios pessoais e equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e pessoal com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 5.5. *Preocupações e desafios com a comunicação e gestão de clientes com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 5.6. *Preocupações e desafios na formação e desenvolvimento dos trabalhadores com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 6. Consequências associadas à semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 6.1. Alterações nos níveis de stress com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 6.1.1. *Diminuição do nível de stress com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 6.1.2. *Manutenção do nível de stress com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 6.1.3. *Aumento do nível de stress com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 6.2. Alterações nos níveis de satisfação com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 6.2.1. *Aumento do nível de satisfação com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 6.2.2. *Manutenção do nível de satisfação com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 6.3. Alterações no equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e pessoal com a semana de trabalho reduzida
- 7. Resultados da semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 7.1. Alterações na produtividade com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 7.1.1. *Alterações na produtividade pessoal com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 7.1.2. *Alterações na produtividade da empresa com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 7.2. Alterações na saúde mental e bem-estar com a semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 7.3. Benefícios ambientais associados à semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 7.4. *Alterações na utilização do tempo livre com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 7.4.1. *Atividade extra oficial com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 7.4.2. *Atividade extra não oficial com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 7.5. *Alterações na qualidade do trabalho efetuado com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 8. Fatores de decisão em permanecer numa semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 8.1. Prioridades pessoais para permanecer numa semana de trabalho reduzida
 - 8.1.1. *Valorização do tempo livre com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 8.1.2. *Valorização do salário com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 8.1.3. *Outras prioridades pessoais com a semana de trabalho reduzida*
- 9. *Recomendações relativamente à semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 9.1. *Manutenção e expansão da semana de trabalho reduzida*
 - 9.2. *Implementação gradual e flexível da semana de trabalho reduzida*

9.3.Consulta e envolvimento dos colaboradores na semana de trabalho reduzida

9.4.Organização e gestão eficiente com a semana de trabalho reduzida

9.5.Cultura de equipa e confiança com a semana de trabalho reduzida