



Self-Determination Theory and Motivation: A Case Study of Microsoft Japan's Four-Day Workweek

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Abstract: In 2019, Microsoft Japan introduced a four-day workweek alongside initiatives to encourage employees to take time off for mental health. This implementation yielded remarkable results, showing a 40% increase in productivity, while employees reported lower stress levels and an improved work-life balance (Microsoft, 2019). There have been various theories regarding why this policy had these impacts, with one popular reason being the enhancement in employee psychological well-being. Through a case study, we investigated how worker motivation impacts productivity and satisfaction from Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek policy. Specifically, we analyzed how the results of Microsoft's policy are explained by Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000), which is an influential model on mental well-being that breaks down the phenomenon into three core components: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The paper concludes that Self-Determination Theory can be used as an appropriate framework through implied increases of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with some misalignment.

Introduction

The nature of work is no longer what we are used to. In response to the global rise in mental health awareness (World Health Organization & UNICEF, 2022), many companies have introduced new policies to support their employees' mental and physical well-being. (Mazur & Mazur-Małek, 2017). Among these, there is the emergence of a four-day work week, which is being adopted in many countries such as South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and more. (American Psychological Association, 2025). It promises to enhance worker productivity while improving employee mental health (4 Day Week Global, n.d.). This raises many questions: How can a four-day workweek lead to such improvements? What caused the shift in output for employees participating in this working arrangement? The four-day workweek instituted by Microsoft Japan (Microsoft Japan, 2019) is one of the most prominent examples of how this occurrence came to be, and this paper will examine the motivational mechanisms behind this shift.

Japan's working culture has long been famous for the intense working hours employees are subject to, which is praised in the Japanese culture because of its association with resilience and dedication. (Yamauchi et al., 2017) Japanese working culture originated a term called "karoshi", which translates to death by overwork (Ke, 2012). Therefore, it is easy to understand why such a policy is implemented in Microsoft Japan. In context, it is a radical choice, due to the intensity of Japan's working culture, the implementation of the four-day workweek still took the world by storm. Nonetheless, it resulted in impressive improvements: a 40% increase in productivity, enhanced employee well-being, and reduced operational costs.

The results of the four-day workweek report an increase in productivity and employee well-being, which implies an internal behavioral shift in order to lead to such results (Fang et al., 2023). Thus, this paper aims to explore how this positive shift occurred and the motivational



reasons behind this shift. Improved psychological well-being is frequently mentioned as a key reason for adopting a four-day workweek policy (American Psychological Association, 2025). This paper will utilize Richard Ryan and Edward Deci's Self-Determination Theory as a theoretical framework. It asserts that three core needs have to be met for this increase to take place: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These needs are essential for fostering both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, promoting social development, and enhancing overall well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2000). These factors ultimately contribute to increased job satisfaction. Therefore, this paper seeks to explore how well this theory explains Microsoft Japan's implementation of the four-day workweek that inherently increases worker self-determination, increasing worker satisfaction and productivity. Although the theoretical framework focuses on motivation rather than satisfaction and productivity, such outcomes can be interpreted as evidence of increased intrinsic motivation (as stated by the theory).

The paper will first explain the theoretical framework of Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, and then provide a comprehensive literature review on other papers that have already stress-tested this theory, and other firms that have implemented the four-day workweek policy. Section 3 will be on outlining the case study (Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek) and its results. Section 4 presents the application of the Self-Determination Theory to Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek and how well the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) explains its results. Sections 5 and 6 depict the discussion/analysis for these results, and the conclusion for it, which includes this paper's shortcomings and future applications for research.

Theoretical Framework

Overview of Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory

Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a well-known psychological framework that explains how differentiating social conditions and situations can influence human motivation and psychological well-being. This theory not only addresses motivation but also explores the underlying conditions that can either enhance or diminish it. Unlike approaches that emphasize external rewards as motivators, SDT takes into account the factors influencing our innate psychological needs, which can substantially affect our mental and physical health.

The table below summarizes the Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan. It is divided into three rows, each indicating one of the three core needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness). Each core need is followed by a definition, its function in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Indicator	Definition	Function in intrinsic motivation	Function in extrinsic motivation
Autonomy	The sense of acting according to one's free will, individually	Important in engendering intrinsic motivation, improving	Supports the internalization of external actions by

	or collectively.	a sense of ownership over one's work, and allowing one to have a greater sense of control.	allowing individuals to feel a sense of self-control over their actions. The more self-determined the action is, the more autonomy one feels.
Competence	The feeling of having the ability to achieve goals and handle challenges efficiently or successfully.	Plays a pivotal role in enhancing intrinsic motivation, boosting self-efficacy.	Help people carry out tasks successfully, increasing the likelihood of people adopting externally regulated actions as personally important.
Relatedness	The feeling of belonging, often achieved by having a secure connection to others.	Improves relationships, fosters a stronger sense of purpose and belonging.	Encourages the internalization of an extrinsically motivated action by enhancing one's relationship to the people, encouraging/punishing the action.

From this framework, one can infer that each of the three needs plays a pivotal role in forming self-determination. However, it is also the case that the more autonomy that one fosters, the more internalized a behavior can be, which emphasizes the importance of autonomy in this theory, more so than competence and relatedness.

Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is the innate human tendency to commit to behaviors that serve personal growth and enjoyment. For example, if one were to engage in an activity, eg, biking, they would do it because they genuinely enjoy biking, not because of environmental incentives or rewards. This behavior is exhibited in humans from infancy; humans display curiosity and engagement before we can grasp the concept of external rewards or punishment.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), a sub-theory of SDT, provides us with a clearer insight into how social and environmental factors impact intrinsic motivation. CET highlights 2 key needs: competence and autonomy. Regarding competence, intrinsic motivation is engendered in individuals when they receive positive feedback for their behaviors or undergo optimal challenges. Competence is achieved as a result of such positive feedback. However, competence alone is not sufficient to attain intrinsic motivation; individuals must also feel a sense of autonomy. By believing their behavior is self-determined rather than externally

controlled, the autonomy criterion is met. Although not as paramount as the aforementioned two, relatedness also plays a role in sustaining intrinsic motivation. When people feel intrinsically connected with others, a sense of motivation also forms. Intrinsic motivation can only be fostered when one does something they enjoy, of their own accord. If an action does not fall into this category, it will then not be accounted as induced by intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation

In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to a motivation to participate in activities that serve an external purpose, such as receiving a reward or punishment for one's actions. Returning to the biking example, extrinsic motivation will be fostered if that action is motivated because of environmental factors, such as getting a reward for engaging in biking.

To further understand extrinsic motivation, Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) - a sub-theory of the SDT, which classifies different forms of extrinsic motivation based on the degree of self-determination - is introduced. According to the OIT, there is a spectrum of the degree to which one's self-determined actions are and the effects on their rewards. The OIT posits a spectrum of self-determined actions, with varying degrees influencing the resulting rewards. At the end of the spectrum is amotivation, where behaviors are not self-determined. Moving rightward, as the degree of self-determination increases, different subtypes of extrinsic motivation can be found.

The spectrum divides our actions into 4 subtypes. External Regulation actions are performed to gain rewards or avoid punishments (e.g., working to gain a paycheck); introjected regulation actions are actions driven by obligation towards something, or one's self-worth concerns (e.g., exercising to avoid feeling lazy); identified regulation actions are actions performed because they to a degree align with personal values or goals, and still holds external benefits (e.g., studying to become a doctor because it is important to society); integrated regulation – Actions fully aligned with one's identity and values, although is still categorized as extrinsically motivated (e.g., running a business because it aligns with personal aspirations).

The theory also contends that the more self-determined the behavior is, the more positive the outcome will be.

Facilitating extrinsic motivation means fostering autonomy for behaviors that are not interesting. According to OIT, the 3 core conditions (autonomy, relatedness, competence) are equally important and must be met to support this process.

Literature Review

Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory is a well-established framework that explains how psychological well-being can be improved. As mentioned in section 1, humans can cultivate psychological well-being only when the three core needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) are satisfied.

Using Ryan and Deci's framework, Gagné et al. (2022) contend that SDT can help predict the motivational consequences of future work. Such aspects should be considered to support employee motivation, well-being, and adaptability. Specifically, Gagné et al. (2022) compiled the positive and negative effects of the psychological needs according to the SDT from available research and meta-analyses. Research revealed that job autonomy, performance feedback, social support, and skills variety would have positive effects on competence, autonomy, and relatedness, while engendering self-motivated determination. Reaching a similar conclusion, Coccia (2019), had emphasized that workplaces leveraging SDT principles can achieve higher innovation, accomplishments, and engagement from employees. Taken together, this literature suggests that the effectiveness of SDT in the workplace indeed accounts for the enhancement in mental well-being.

Regarding the four-day workweek, Daniel and Martinez (2023) argued that it had a positive impact on productivity and employee satisfaction and offered benefits for well-being. In some sectors, it contributes to increased revenue. Notably, technology and finance appear to have the most significant increase in productivity. Despite promising results, the success of the four-day workweek depends on industry context and execution. For this model to work, companies are recommended to conduct phased trials, engage employees, restructure workflows, and monitor financial metrics for successful adoption. As for Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek, Gatlin-Keener and Lunsford (2020) have evaluated the case and contended that while the results of Microsoft Japan were prominent, it might not be sustainable due to the three-day company shutdown, and employee motivation could fade over time. They have also noted that the case is still very successful, and that may have been because the employees were highly motivated to make the case study work, and Microsoft Japan's particular working environment.

From here, we can infer that other studies have found similar increases in productivity in other four-day workweek models, and another study has attributed this enhancement to the possible increase in employee motivation. Other studies assert that SDT could explain the improvement in mental well-being. Other studies have not applied SDT in the context of a large-scale corporation's four-day workweek. This paper contributes to that gap by examining the framework of SDT in Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek and explaining the increase in productivity and satisfaction.

Research method

Research question

We aim to investigate how Self-Determination Theory explains the change in employee satisfaction and productivity seen in Microsoft Japan's implementation of a four-day workweek. Offering a unique opportunity to examine how changing workplace structures can influence motivation. The dependent variable being measured is the productivity enhanced as a result of the increased extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, since Microsoft Japan's results do not provide information on enhanced motivation. This paper uses a case study research methodology to examine how well Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory explains the change in employee motivation and, as a result, the enhanced result in a real-world example: Microsoft Japan's implementation of a four-day workweek.

Evaluating the Case Study

Policies of the four-day workweek

The four-day workweek initiative began when Microsoft Japan identified workstyle innovation as the core of its management strategy. Therefore, in August of 2019, they implemented the “「週勤 4 日 & 週休 3 日」を柱とする自社実践プロジェクト「ワークライフチョイスチャレンジ 2019 夏」” (roughly translated to Work-Life Choice Challenge 2019 Summer), where workers have 4 days of work and 3 days for weekends, aiming to focus on enhancing employees' productivity and creativity, without reducing employee pay. Moreover, the challenge also included support programs titled:

- For Work: Providing subsidies for expenses related to self-development (course enrolment fees, tuition fees, examination fees, etc, a cross-cultural and cross-industry work experience program, opportunity to visit other companies with different cultures and industries to gain work experience and learn) during August 2019
- For Life: providing subsidies for expenses related to family trips and leisure activities during the period (Domestic travel expenses, sports facility fees, leisure expenses, etc.)
- For Society: providing support for social contribution activities expenses, subsidies for expenses related to social contribution in August 2019 (Volunteer activity fees, transportation fees, accommodation fees, etc, Social Contribution Matching Program).

In order to promote effective time usage within these four days, Microsoft Japan has developed new practices for internal meetings and email communication, which have been identified as time-consuming for employees. During this particular period, Microsoft Teams had been utilized to effectively hold online meetings as opposed to chatting. The additional day off was implemented to create flexibility in employees' work schedules, giving them supplemental time to fulfill livelihood needs, promoting working shorter hours for more rest time. After the challenge was completed, the results were published for other corporations to utilize as a reference for work-style reforms.

Results of the four-day workweek (Microsoft, 2019)

The program delivered remarkable and unexpected results, resulting in significant reductions and notable improvements that exceeded our expectations. To verify and utilize the results, Microsoft Japan used its Workplace Analytics (Microsoft Viva Insights).

Regarding the reductions, due to having one more day off, the number of working days in August 2019 reduced by 25.4% compared to August 2018. The program also reduced the employee budget since, compared to August 2016, the print volume had reduced by more than half (58.7%) in August 2019. Additionally, the power consumption in August 2019 reduced by 23.1% as opposed to August 2016.

On the other hand, regarding the increases, worker productivity saw a remarkable increase of 40%. In addition, in 2019, the number of 30-minute meetings rose by 46% compared to August

2018. Moreover, not just the number of lengthy meetings increased, but meetings held in August 2019 increased by 21% when compared to the period from April to June 2019. The connection between employees has also strengthened; the number of daily networking events in August 2019 grew by 10% compared to August 2018.

Furthermore, workers had positively responded to the Work-Life challenge. A 94% approval of this initiative overall, while 92.1% approved specifically of the four-day work week policy. Employees have also assessed the impact of the For Work, For Life, and For Society reforms: with 96.5% noting the 'For Work' program has an impact on their work life, and 97.1% reporting the 'For Life' program had impacted their daily life. Likewise, 83.5% of participants stated the 'For Society' program had influenced their awareness or behavior regarding society.

Results

Intrinsic motivation

In the case of Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek, the three core needs for intrinsic motivation are fostered as follows.

Regarding autonomy, following the definition of one being able to act of their own free will, it is fostered through the additional day off work. The challenge emphasizes that taking a day off is essential for employees to meet their personal well-being needs. By having more time for themselves, employees gain the freedom to use that time as they wish, not bound to work obligations. This opportunity allows them to recharge and focus on what truly matters to them, ultimately enhancing their overall productivity and satisfaction. This, in turn, will increase autonomy within the employees, evident from the increase in job satisfaction in the employee survey, with 96.5% of employees agreeing that the challenge had a positive impact on their work-life and 97.1% agreeing that it had a positive impact on their personal life.

Although there is no direct measurement of competence, certain indicators might suggest its enhancement. Productivity among employees increased by 40%. Evident in the increase in the number of both offline and online meetings, resulting in competence being strengthened. (Mardiani et al., 2023) Employees have to face the challenge of having the same workload as they used to when they had a five-day workweek, yet still have to resolve the same amount in four days. If they were able to adapt to such demands, they might gain a feeling of efficiency and capability in their roles. Furthermore, an increase in the number of both offline and online meetings might signify that there is an increase in productivity among employees, potentially resulting in competence being strengthened.

Concerning relatedness, although it cannot be directly fostered by external sources in the context of intrinsic motivation, it can be stimulated by creating conditions that allow individuals to build meaningful connections. In the case of the four-day workweek, with the additional time employees have outside of work, they can spend that time connecting with others and nurturing meaningful relationships. This is further suggested by the fact that daily networking events have increased by 10%, as reported by employees, reinforcing the notion of increased relatedness.

However, this framework is not without its faults, and there is some misalignment recorded compared to the original SDT. In this challenge, there is no direct measure to indicate “interest” within employees; therefore, the increase in intrinsic motivation in employees is inferred rather than observed or stated by employees. Furthermore, one less day of work could lead to some employees feeling rushed about having to complete more work per day, which could undermine their enjoyment, thwarting intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation

While there is no direct indication that autonomy can not be measured with external factors in this challenge, a possible factor that could promote autonomy is that employees receive the same amount of pay in this challenge as they did when still working five days a week. This may promote identified regulation (OIT) - a highly autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. Employees have more control over their time and activities, reinforcing their sense of autonomy. Moreover, productivity increased by 40% in this challenge, a direct result of increased autonomy (Johannsen & Zak, 2020).

For competence, as stated in the original challenge, employees are encouraged to use Microsoft Office tools, and the challenge provides grounds for the increase in the usage of such tools. Competence is then inferred because employees are expected to master such tools, and a result of that would be an increase in employee productivity. As aforementioned, productivity cultivated would strengthen competence, and this is reinforced by the results of the employee well-being survey, where there is an impressive increase of 40% in productivity, taking the world by storm with how seemingly effective this policy is. There is also a reduction in printing, shifting the workplace towards digital solutions.

On the topic of relatedness, it is enhanced through the work-life programs implemented by Microsoft Japan. All three programs provide subsidies for expenses relating to self-development, family, and societal issues. The inclusion of such programs creates an ideal environment for relatedness to nurture, as at least 80% of participants have agreed that such programs have had an impact on their livelihoods. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that relatedness has been cultivated within these employees.

Once again, there is always a misalignment in the original theory with this case study. Firstly, potential over-reliance on performance metrics may pressure or stress some individuals, especially when trying to do the same amount of work in fewer days. Some employees might feel controlled instead of extrinsically motivated. Likewise, since Microsoft Japan has formed a communication etiquette for employees, it could lead to the feeling of being controlled if such reforms are not properly and firmly supported.

The table below summarizes the results of this case study: how Microsoft Japan’s four-day workweek relates to the Self-Determination Theory. Since the theory contends that when the three core needs are met, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are fostered. Therefore, the table is

divided into 2 rows, separating intrinsic motivation from extrinsic motivation. For both types of motivation, the three core needs for self-determination are listed with indicators that corroborate how such needs are met. It is important to note the misalignment in Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek compared to the original theory, which is why the misalignment column is included.

Type of Motivation	How were the core components of Self-Determination Theory met	Indicators	Misalignment
Intrinsic motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Autonomy: more time to oneself due to the additional day off- Competence: challenge of having the same workload and dealing with such in fewer days- Relatedness: More time to connect with others outside of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reported increase in job satisfaction- Increased both 30-minute meeting times and online meetings- Networking has increased by 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- No direct measure of "interest" in tasks; intrinsic motivation is inferred rather than observed- Some teams may have felt rushed, undermining enjoyment
Extrinsic motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Autonomy: People still receive the same amount of pay even with the extra day off- Competence: Increased digital tools usage- Relatedness: Policies to support work, life, and society cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Productivity increased by 40% -> Result of engendered autonomy and competence in the workplace- Reducing printing and electricity usage indicates a shift towards digital solutions.- Each support program has at least 80% of employees agreeing it had an impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Potential over-reliance on performance metrics may pressure some individuals- External structure (communication etiquette) could feel controlling if not properly supported

Discussion/Analysis:

The underwhelming effect of autonomy

Research highlights the important role of autonomy in fostering self-determination in enhancing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Autonomy has often been emphasized as an important factor in promoting well-being (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Kelloway et al., 2023).

Although one can infer that autonomy has increased in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, it is not directly indicated in Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek challenge. For instance, in the case of Perpetual Guardian in New Zealand in 2018, they also included a four-day work week policy. An increase in autonomy is more pronounced, as there is an increase from 54% to 78% of employees agreeing they could successfully manage their work-life balance (Perpetual Guardian, 2018). In the case of Iceland's four-day workweek, by the Autonomy and the research organisation Association for Sustainability and Democracy (Alda), 2500 workers (more than 1% of the labor market in Iceland) participated in the trial and reported increased work-life balance (Haraldsson & Kellam, 2021).

Having said that, in the case of Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek, the effect of autonomy is less pronounced than it should be if it were the most prominent factor of the three, as the indicators are implied and not directly recorded. One possible explanation is that one can only be certain that employees receive an extra day off and are paid the same; there are no specific indications of increased intrinsic autonomy. According to the Organismic Integration Theory, this would only fall under identified regulation. Reports from Microsoft Japan did not indicate employees felt like they had more choice in how they work, but rather just an extra day off, and choice is then inferred. Additionally, there is no direct indication of an increase in work-life balance; in this case, there is just an impact on employees' work and personal lives. Another plausible explanation is not within the design of the study itself, but the constrained time employees are given. The shorter workweek may have offset autonomy gains since employees did not have the choice to work five days and are instead subjected to compressed deadlines. This paper suggests the SDT model should be updated to more specifically define what constitutes autonomy, as the current definition of autonomy can hardly be measured, and therefore, if updated, will help improve this case study.

The impact of relatedness

In contrast to the pronounced importance of autonomy in Self-Determination Theory, relatedness plays a less significant role, albeit still crucial in fostering well-being in the Self-Determination Theory. However, in the case of Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek, it is easier to see the fulfillment of the need compared to autonomy in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. While relatedness plays a less noteworthy role in the formation of intrinsic motivation within individuals, in this case study, the results of relatedness being enhanced are more evident for participants. It was reported that networking events increased by 10% (Microsoft, 2019). This increase in relatedness might be attributed again to Japan's demanding working culture. Therefore, with an extra day off, it might be the case that employees are more relaxed and can focus on things outside of their work. For relatedness in extrinsic motivation, it is also more pronounced as employees have rated the For Work/Life/Society Programs as impactful, and these programs provide support relating to employees' relatedness.

The importance of competence

The same can be said for competence in the case of Self-Determination Theory. The effects of competence are more evident than those of autonomy in this case study. As for competence, although it is still mainly inferred in this case, the conclusion is still more evident than that of autonomy. The increase in meetings and productivity supports this claim. This may be because, albeit still a mental construct, competence can have other measures, for example, productivity (Mardiani et al., 2023). Another explanation is that because the culture of work in Japan is already highly driven, employees have less difficulty completing the same amount of tasks in shorter times, and as stated above, if completed, could lead to an increase in competence for these employees.

VII. Conclusion

Key points

The paper discovers that Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory offers a useful framework for explaining the change in productivity and satisfaction recorded among Microsoft Japan's 2019 summer initiative participants. Despite relying on inferred data and the absence of direct psychological measures, the successful results of the four-day workweek can be attributed to increased intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, supported by the fulfilling autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This case study not only serves a pivotal role in further understanding the policy's success for further developments on four-day workweeks but also underscores the need to refine SDT to better suit workplace contexts for enhanced employee well-being.

Research limitations

One of the most challenging tasks in analyzing Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek is the difficulty in relating it to Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, given that most of the available data points are not direct measurements of increased motivation or enhanced psychological well-being. There is no exact measurement of employees' intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Rather, there are by proxy increases in satisfaction and productivity. From Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (2000), these factors can be a direct deduction of increased intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, respectively. However, without direct employee output, this remains merely speculative. It would be more preferable if the results of this case study had employees outwardly state that they feel more motivated at work. Secondly, autonomy, relatedness, and competence, although supported by outcomes in Microsoft Japan's summer challenge, these needs are still assumed, rather than outwardly stated by employees. Although there is a concrete basis that if these needs were met, the outcomes would be the ones observed from the case study, it is still assumed, and might leave room for outliers. Because the three needs are all psychological states, there is no accurate measurement of such needs.

These difficulties underscore the importance of integrating Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory to Microsoft Japan's four-day workweek. A modifier that could make this a more effective case study is that quantitative or qualitative data could be collected on the employees' motivation or overall psychological well-being. For instance, employee interviews or survey

questions such as “Do you feel more motivated at work after the 2018 Summer Challenge?” could be included. As aforementioned, there are cases where the needs can be directly inferred from employee surveys after the policy change. If that were the case in Microsoft Japan’s four-day workweek, it would be a more successful case study.

Opportunities for future studies

For future implications of this paper, a revised Self-Determination Theory with more detailed definitions for the three needs or methods of measurement for said needs can be used as a proper framework for explaining Microsoft Japan’s four-day workweek. Additionally, future studies can explore the importance of meeting the three needs for policy-making, better tailored to employees’ mental well-being, or examine the means needed for a successful four-day workweek. Understanding the conditions for engendering and improving employee productivity and satisfaction through enhanced motivation is crucial for continuing to uphold such results.

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