

Research article

# Improving working conditions in response to skills shortages

## Mejorar las condiciones de trabajo en respuesta a la escasez de habilidades

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** The article is devoted to the study of ways to improve working conditions as a response to the shortage of qualified personnel in the modern labor market. **Methodology:** To conduct a thorough study of improving working conditions in situations where there is a shortage of skilled personnel, the methodology of this study includes analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, dialectical, analytical, analogical, and generalizable methods. **Results:** The results provide an overview of EU regulations on occupational safety and working time, as well as examples of effective practices for improving working conditions at the enterprise and state levels. **Discussions:** The article focuses on the role of legislative initiatives in European countries (Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, France, Great Britain), which have proven the effectiveness of reducing working hours, strengthening social guarantees and supporting lifelong learning. **Conclusions:** The findings emphasize that the

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modernization of working conditions is a strategic factor in increasing productivity, reducing staff turnover, and long-term business competitiveness, and also identify areas for further research on the impact of different models of work organization and social protection on labor market stability.

**Keywords:** working conditions; skills shortages; working hours; employee engagement; staff retention; social guarantees.

## Resumen

**Introducción:** El artículo se dedica al estudio de las maneras de mejorar las condiciones laborales como respuesta a la escasez de personal cualificado en el mercado laboral moderno.

**Metodología:** Para realizar un estudio exhaustivo de la mejora de las condiciones laborales en situaciones de escasez de personal cualificado, la metodología de este estudio incluye análisis, síntesis, inducción, deducción, métodos dialécticos, analíticos, analógicos y generalizables.

**Resultados:** Los resultados ofrecen una visión general de la normativa de la UE sobre seguridad laboral y tiempo de trabajo, así como ejemplos de prácticas eficaces para mejorar las condiciones laborales a nivel empresarial y estatal. **Discusiones:** El artículo se centra en el papel de las iniciativas legislativas en países europeos (Suecia, Países Bajos, Alemania, Finlandia, Francia, Gran Bretaña), que han demostrado la eficacia de la reducción de la jornada laboral, el fortalecimiento de las garantías sociales y el apoyo al aprendizaje permanente.

**Conclusiones:** Los hallazgos enfatizan que la modernización de las condiciones laborales es un factor estratégico para aumentar la productividad, reducir la rotación de personal y la competitividad empresarial a largo plazo, y también identifican áreas para futuras investigaciones sobre el impacto de los diferentes modelos de organización del trabajo y protección social en la estabilidad del mercado laboral.

## 1. Introducción

Today's labor market is experiencing an acute shortage of skilled workers, forcing employers to address the issue of improving working conditions. Employers are forced to find new strategies to attract and retain people due to changes in the skills market and increased competition. Among these strategies, special attention is paid to improving working conditions, which includes not only more flexible working hours and longer working days but also better social guarantees and comfortable working conditions (Yaroshenko et al., 2024). This study aims to examine how improving working conditions can help address the shortage of skilled workers and maintain the stability of the labor force. This is particularly important given the growing demand for highly skilled professionals.

The importance of the study stems from the need to address the shortage of skilled labor, which is already a significant obstacle for many sectors of the economy. A lack of skilled labor can lead to lower production, higher costs, and slower economic growth. Employers are being forced to compete for talent as a result of global factors, including an aging population, migration patterns, and changing skills needs. Creating an enjoyable workplace that meets the requirements and expectations of skilled workers is one of the best strategies for attracting new employees and retaining existing ones.

In addition to increasing employee happiness, better working conditions, such as more flexible schedules, telecommuting options, better benefits packages, and more comfortable workplaces, also encourage employee loyalty and a desire to stay with the company. This is especially important in situations where an organization's ability to operate successfully depends on the development and retention of its workforce.

For this reason, the study of improving working conditions in response to the shortage of skilled workers is not only relevant but also vital for the stable growth of the labor market and the economy as a whole.

Several scholars have studied occupational health and safety and the improvement of working conditions, including J. Oakman et al (2020), A. Getman et al (2023), and others who investigated the impact of working from home on the mental and physical health of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, including identifying gender differences and developing recommendations for improving workers' health. K. M. Didur & S. P. Dmytriuk (2020) studied the deterioration of working conditions at Ukrainian enterprises and its negative consequences, emphasizing the need to improve the occupational health and safety management system. The study emphasizes the importance of the cost-effectiveness of measures to improve working conditions, which is determined by increased productivity, reduced time and personnel costs, and improved social indicators. V. P. Korchenko (2024) studied the structure, functioning, and regulation of the global labor market, analyzing its dynamics, unemployment problems, the impact of the digital economy, and development prospects.

K. M. Kraus et al (2022) studied the characteristics of Labour 4.0 in the context of digitalization and the use of artificial intelligence analyzed economic inequality, employment and unemployment in Ukraine, as well as prospects for the development of the labor market, including remote work and the gig economy. They also highlighted current labor trends in the EU. M. Kokhan et al (2024) investigated the development of human capital and the achievement of social cohesion in the context of strategic potential and dynamic change. It was found that competencies, health, and cultural capital are crucial for economic development.

Human capital is seen as a key element of strategic potential, important for economic and social progress. Ways to improve the quality of human capital and social cohesion in Ukraine have been analyzed, including education, healthcare, and reducing social exclusion. This study aims to find out how improving working conditions, in particular working hours, can make scarce jobs more attractive and help retain skilled workers.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The approach of this study is based on the widespread use of several methodologies that allow for an in-depth study of the problem of improving working conditions in the face of a shortage of skilled labor. The analytical approach allows us to describe all aspects of working conditions, including workplace comfort, social guarantees, flexible working hours, and working hours. By examining each of these elements separately, it is possible to show their impact on attracting and retaining competent employees. By combining data from multiple sources, the synthesis method creates a broader picture of how improving working conditions can help address the staff shortage.

Induction and deduction techniques help to extract general principles from specific circumstances and apply these concepts to a wider variety of contexts. Selected case studies of effective methods for improving working conditions are examined by induction, and from these case studies, general propositions that can be applied to a variety of enterprises and institutions are derived by deduction.

By using the dialectical technique, we were able to look at the mismatches that exist between actual working conditions - which may be unattractive to employees - and the need for employers to have skilled workers. Identifying and addressing these mismatches helps to develop more practical strategies for improving working conditions that will satisfy both employers and employees.

By identifying the elements that have the greatest impact on employees' willingness to stay at work, the analytical methodology expands our understanding of the link between work circumstances and employee motivation. By using an abstract approach, we were able to focus on the most important elements that influence the retention of competent employees, separating the important components of improving working conditions from the less important details. Ultimately, a comprehensive plan for improving working conditions that addresses the skills shortage and supports labor market stability was able to be developed by applying a generalization method to draw broad conclusions and suggestions based on all the data collected.

### 3. Results

The creation of employee protection laws has received much attention over the past few decades within the European Union. The adoption of this law and its compliance are the main areas of development of the legal framework of EU member states. To ensure safe and healthy working conditions, the European Union actively supports non-legal actions in the field of occupational health and safety, working closely with informal partners, including insurance companies and individual employee and employer associations.

Several legislative and regulatory measures have been introduced in recent years to improve health and safety systems in EU member states. The EU's governing bodies are working to bring together the collective efforts of member states in this area. They do this by issuing health and safety regulations that cover various aspects of industrial activity and are incorporated into national labor laws, which constantly raises the bar for EU efforts. In addition, considerable organizational and advocacy work is carried out, aimed not only at the management of enterprises but also at the general workforce (Yaroshenko et al., 2023). The EU legislation in the field of labor protection can be divided into the following groups: a) EU directives on the protection of workers; b) EU directives on placing products on the market, the so-called New Approach Directives (Kokhan et al., 2024).

EU directives relating to occupational health and safety:

- (1) general principles of prevention and the basics of occupational safety and health (Council Directive 89/391/EEC);
- (2) occupational safety and health at work (Council Directive 89/654/EEC, which deals with requirements for the workplace; Council Directive 92/91/EEC on the protection of workers at work, Council Directive 92/57/EEC on construction sites where minerals are extracted through boreholes, Council Directive 92/104/EEC on the protection of workers at work in mining; Council Directive 93/103/EEC (work on board fishing vessels); Council Directive 1999/92/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of workers exposed to potentially explosive atmospheres);

- (3) occupational health and safety during the use of equipment (Council Directive 89/655/EEC on the use of workplace equipment by workers; Council Directive 89/656/EEC on personal protective equipment at work; Council Directive 90/269/EEC on manual handling of loads where there is a risk of back injury to workers; Council Directive 90/270/EEC on the protection of workers at work behind display screens; Council Directive 92/58/EEC on the use of signs warning of safety and/or health hazards at work);
- (4) occupational safety and health at work with chemical, physical and biological substances (Council Directive 90/394/EEC on requirements for handling carcinogenic substances at work; Council Directive 2000/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of workers with biological materials; Council Directive 98/24/EC on the requirements for the protection of workers against chemicals at work; Council Directive 96/82/EC on the handling of dangerous substances which may cause accidents; Directive 2002/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of workers against the risks associated with vibration; Council Directive 83/477/EEC on measures to address the risks posed by asbestos at work);
- (5) occupational health and safety at work for certain groups of workers (Council Directive 92/85/EEC on the protection of pregnant workers, women in labour and nursing mothers at work; Council Directive 94/33/EC on the protection of young people at work; Council Directive 91/383/EEC on the work requirements for workers in temporary employment);
- (6) working time requirements (Council Directive 93/104/EEC on the organisation of working time);
- (7) provisions on equipment, machinery, pressure vessels, etc. (Directive 98/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on machinery; Directive 89/688/EEC on personal protective equipment; Directive 94/9/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on equipment intended for use in explosive atmospheres; Council Directive 87/404/EEC on pressure equipment; Directive 97/23/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on product safety).

Thus, the main EU requirements for occupational safety and health are set out in the relevant directives, which are the basis for the mandatory development of legislation in the EU countries to ensure the maintenance of a uniform level of occupational safety and health in the EU. This also applies to ergonomics. Ergonomics requirements in EU member states are reflected in EU legislation, namely Directive 89/391 on measures to improve the safety and health of workers. The legislation requires employers to assess occupational risks, ensure that adequate protective and preventive measures are in place, ensure that employees are properly trained and instructed to ensure compliance with safety measures, provide employees with information and advice, and allow them to participate in discussions on all topics relating to occupational health and safety (Bratko, 2024).

Ergonomics pays the greatest attention to injuries. The requirements in this area are set out in Directive 89/654/EEC on mandatory minimum safety requirements for workplaces. The provisions of this Directive only partially address ergonomics, recommending the provision of break rooms for employees and, in the case of disabled employees, the provision of appropriate workplace arrangements.



Directive No 89/655/EEC 'On the mandatory minimum safety requirements for tools and equipment used by workers at work' highlights important aspects of ergonomics, namely: auxiliary operations of employees while performing the main operations when working with machine tools and technical equipment; compliance with ergonomic principles in the development of tools and equipment used in production.

The European Union does not ignore the issue of heavy labor: safety when moving goods manually, which is covered in Directive No. 90/269/EEC, aimed at reducing the risk of back injuries, especially lower back injuries when working with heavy loads. The ergonomic requirements are most fully disclosed in Directive 90/270/EEC on minimum safety requirements for video display terminals, which concerns the safety of employees working with computers. It states that companies using computer technology should check their conditions for safety, harmlessness, and the use of personal protective equipment that reduces the possibility of visual impairment, unbearable bodily symptoms, or mental stress. The directive suggests that operators' working days should be planned in such a way that they take breaks or perform other tasks in between (Kraus et al., 2022).

In almost every EU country, there are legislative or national laws relating to the study or teaching of occupational health and safety in secondary and tertiary education. The priority is either an in-depth study of the subject or the development of practical skills, depending on the purpose of the training; understanding the regulations is paramount (Tkachenko, 2024a). Most EU member states have several laws that contain provisions for employee protection. Firstly, there are the constitutional provisions, which are the main legal basis of the state and contain the guiding principles of occupational health and safety policy. The main purpose of these laws is to improve the protection of workers. Worker involvement, information sharing, training constant government oversight, and focus on the issue are the methods by which this goal will be achieved. For example, a law in Spain established a fund for the improvement of working conditions, which is partly financed by payments from insurance groups that insure employment-related risks and partly by public funds. Regional governmental organizations oversee the management of the fund, including contributions from businesses and employees.

Most national laws regulating normal working conditions apply to employees of state administrative bodies and contain obligations for producers and importers (Tkachenko, 2024b). However, they often exclude the police, military facilities, and prisons. The National Institute for the Prevention of Injuries and Safety at Work (Italy) has created a television cartoon called 'Luca's House', which explains to children how to behave at home and on the street to avoid various accidents. Portugal has a National Occupational Health and Safety Training Programme whose motto is: 'Occupational health and safety: learn today - apply knowledge for life'. The course is compulsory in secondary, vocational, and higher education institutions (Sydorenko, 2024).

The Health and Safety Executive, for example, has been able to integrate health and safety programs into the UK's general education network, extending from school courses to university courses. The government's 'Safety First' initiative has highlighted the need for this training. Assessing the leadership of the European Union, it can be predicted that in a few years, a single area of vocational education centered around the topic of 'safety at work' will be created across the continent. Recently, the European Commission has shifted its focus from creating secondary legislation to implementing it.

The actual goal of implementation should be to improve working conditions. This requires strict enforcement of the law. However, regulation (and its enforcement) is only one way to improve standard operating procedures in the workplace. Most countries have one national statute that primarily implements the framework directive. In addition to the above-mentioned laws, most Member States also have other relevant laws and decrees, as well as other technical regulations, which deal with highly specialized aspects of technical or working circumstances. Some of these are European directives that regulate things like working with high or low-pressure equipment, electricity, safety on construction sites, lifts, etc. Other directives relate to lead, asbestos, and physical and biological substances in the workplace. In addition, many health and safety regulations are regulated by some collective labor agreements (Cymbal et al., 2024).

It is possible to more successfully prevent dangerous and harmful working conditions, reduce injuries and accidents at work, improve working conditions both directly at work and by creating an effective system for improving working conditions in industry, etc. by ensuring the proper and effective development of the occupational safety system at the state level and its effective implementation at the level of individual enterprises. Only in workplaces with decent working conditions can effective employment be possible, and this cannot be achieved without establishing proper safety standards and decent wages.

To do this, it is necessary to introduce economic mechanisms that would encourage employers to fulfill obligations to ensure safe working conditions, to promptly conduct certification of workplaces, and to implement comprehensive measures to reduce the negative impact of production factors on the health of workers. All these actions must be supported by a proper legislative framework, which consists of direct communication between the employer and the employee, as well as effective coordination of many labor protection organizations (Oakman et al., 2020).

Improving working conditions in response to a shortage of skilled labor is a multifaceted process that addresses several aspects of workplace management to raise standards and meet employee requirements. Employers are forced to look for innovative methods of managing people in the current environment as some businesses struggle with a lack of skilled workers to attract and retain skilled professionals. Improving working conditions becomes crucial to this strategy as it affects employee loyalty, productivity, and overall job satisfaction in addition to their motivation.

One of the most important and controversial issues in the field of improving working conditions is the effective use of working time. In the face of a shortage of competent employees, companies are gradually turning to creative methods to improve the well-being of employees, such as the possibility of flexible working hours, shorter working weeks, and the possibility of remote work.

One of the most common strategies companies use to increase employee happiness is to implement flexible work schedules. With this method, employees can adjust the start and end times of the working day according to their schedules and requirements. This is especially important for workers who have personal requirements or family obligations that may require flexibility in time allocation. Employees can better combine work and personal commitments with flexible schedules, which helps reduce the stress of having to stick to a strict schedule (Kvasha, 2023).

A shorter working week is becoming more common. For example, several companies are experimenting with a four-day work week, which will reduce the total number of working hours per week. Giving them extra time for personal rest has a positive effect on employee productivity and overall job satisfaction. According to studies, a shorter working week reduces employee fatigue, increases morale, and increases motivation.

The ability to work partially or completely remotely is now a viable option that the company is actively implementing. The freedom of employees is greatly increased by remote work, allowing them to work from anywhere. By being able to work at home or in any other convenient location, employees can better manage their time and spend less time commuting to and from the office. Since people can work in more comfortable environments and avoid the obstacles that often arise in the office, remote work increases employee productivity.

Applying these strategies in practice increases the level of happiness and productivity of employees, as well as improves working conditions. Reducing stress, exhaustion, and exhaustion through remote work, flexible planning, and shorter working weeks all increase productivity. These adjustments help to reduce staff turnover, as employees are more likely to remain in the company and fulfill their long-term responsibilities if they are allowed to more effectively manage their time and provide comfortable working conditions (Korchenko, 2024).

Strengthening social protection is an important component of improving working conditions and has a great impact on attracting and retaining qualified personnel. To ensure attractive working conditions, modern social security packages that include health insurance, retirement savings, additional leave, and health support programs are becoming increasingly vital.

The main element of the social package is health insurance, which allows workers to receive medical care without significant costs. Comprehensive health insurance plans include hospital stays, specialist consultations, medical check-ups, and prescription drugs. Workers with health insurance are more confident that they and their families will be able to get the treatment they need, which significantly reduces stress levels and increases job satisfaction overall.

Another important element of the social package is pension savings. Retirement plans, like individual or corporate retirement funds, provide employees with more financial security after retirement and help them achieve future financial goals. These programs include both employer donations and payroll deductions, which promote employee loyalty to the business and foster a sense of responsibility for the long-term interests of the employee (Cherniak et al., 2020).

Additional leave is an important component of social promises. These can be additional days for personal purposes or long paid holidays. More vacation time allows employees to recover better from work-related stress, maintain an important work-life balance, and increase productivity throughout. According to studies, employees who have access to longer leave are more satisfied with their work and less prone to burnout.

Health promotion programs cover several activities aimed at supporting the mental and physical well-being of workers. These include workshops on stress management, psychiatric consultations, corporate exercise programs, medical examinations, and vaccinations. These initiatives support workers in leading healthy lifestyles, reducing the risk of illness, and overcoming mental health problems, which contributes to increased productivity and overall job satisfaction.



Offering social guarantees to employees increases their faith in the future and demonstrates the care of the employer. This is an important element that potentially significantly increases employee loyalty and reduces turnover, which is vital in the event of a labor shortage. Employees are more likely to stay in the organization if they believe their employer values and supports them, which helps keep their knowledge and skills in business (Didur & Dmytriuk, 2020).

Companies that offer broad benefits packages have a clear advantage in the struggle for skilled workers since the labor market is now very competitive. In addition to improving working conditions, investments in social security are crucial to attract new specialists and maintain the stability of employees, which contributes to the growth and profitability of the company.

A key factor in solving the problem of labor shortage is the creation of comfortable working conditions. Modern methods of creating a comfortable workplace include updating the physical space, introducing advanced technologies, and ensuring the safety of workers. These elements affect employee productivity and loyalty to the organization in addition to their overall level of happiness.

Modernization of the workspace is an important first step in improving the comfort of employees. Innovative solutions such as adapted areas for quiet operation or open areas that encourage collaboration are common in modern office environments. These zones allow workers to choose the most convenient place to complete work, which reduces stress and increases productivity. For example, improving the lighting, ventilation, and acoustics of the office significantly improves the working environment (Yevtushenko et al., 2022).

The integration of modern technologies is a decisive element in creating a cozy workplace. Electronic equipment such as printers and laptops, among other modern technologies, can greatly simplify everyday activities. In addition, employees increase the overall level of comfort, reduce the number of repetitive tasks, and more effectively organize their work using automation technologies and project management software.

Ergonomic workplaces have furniture and accessories that support correct posture and reduce physical activity. Ergonomic seats, workplaces with the ability to adjust the height, keyboards, and mice, which reduce the load on the wrists and hands, are all components that contribute to reducing the frequency of occupational diseases and greater comfort of employees. According to studies, a well-designed workplace reduces the risk of neck, wrist, and back pain, which increases job satisfaction (Rydzik & Kissoon, 2024).

To create a comfortable working atmosphere, rest places are needed. The presence of places designed specifically for rest or breaks increases the productivity of employees, allowing them to recover during the working day. It can be kitchens, recreation areas, or rest rooms where employees can relax and socialize. Studies show that having short periods of rest and breaks reduces stress levels and increases motivation (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020).

A comfortable workplace also includes a safe working environment. The preservation of the health of workers depends on compliance with strict safety regulations, which include occupational safety, accident prevention, and the provision of the necessary protective equipment. This includes frequent safety briefings, risk analysis, and first aid assurance.

Offering pleasant working conditions is of great importance for attracting and retaining skilled workers. Companies that make investments in updating offices and creating a cozy atmosphere often have an advantage over competitors in the labor market.

Comfortable employees are more motivated and satisfied with the work, which positively affects their results and a sense of commitment to the organization.

For example, Google is known for high standards of comfort in the workplace, offering its employees free lunches, cozy places of rest, flexible working hours, and the ability to work remotely. Salesforce offers its employees access to a variety of professional development and well-being initiatives in addition to implementing flexible work schedules and remote work policies. On the other hand, Netflix is known for offering its employees a flexible work schedule and an unlimited vacation policy that allows them to find a balance between work and personal life (Costa Dias et al., 2020).

Patagonia, a company that specializes in outerwear, provides environmental activities, wellness programs, flexible work schedules, and extensive vacations. In addition to introducing programs to support mental health, professional development, and career development, Adobe offers its employees appropriate working conditions, in particular ergonomic furniture and recreation areas. This helps the company attract and retain qualified specialists. These enterprises demonstrate how creative methods of improving working conditions can significantly affect the level of recruitment and retention of employees by creating attractive jobs that meet the requirements of modern workers (Ipsen et al., 2021).

The issue of improving working conditions is of particular importance in the European Union due to an aging workforce and increased competition in the labor market. The aging of the population creates a significant burden on the labor market due to a decrease in the share of people of working age and an increase in the share of pensioners. With fewer young professionals coming into the workforce and a greater need for competent workers, firms need to rethink the way labor is organized.

The European Commission stresses that to comply with these new norms, working conditions must be changed. Employers are urged to revise the established methods of labor organization, implement new ideas, and actively involve employees in choosing working conditions. Introducing new technologies that simplify processes and reduce stress may be one way to achieve this. Work procedures can be facilitated, for example, with adaptable technology solutions such as remote work platforms (Llop-Gironés et al., 2021).

In addition, it is very important to ensure that employees are involved in making decisions about their working conditions, as this contributes to creating a more comfortable and stimulating workplace. Improving the work environment to meet the needs of diverse segments of the workforce, such as young professionals and people with disabilities, can increase employee engagement and retention.

The European Commission also proposes to invest in the professional development of employees and to introduce initiatives to promote health and well-being. This covers things like health insurance, counseling, and fitness initiatives that contribute to the emotional and physical health of workers. By offering them such circumstances, they increase motivation and a general sense of happiness, which is crucial for retaining skilled workers.

Improving working conditions should be part of the overall development plan of the organization aimed at preserving human potential in the long term. This applies not only to recent changes in working conditions but also to strategic planning, which takes into account future difficulties in the labor market and changes in the requirements of employees.

To maintain the competitiveness of an organization on a global scale, investments in human capital, professional skills development, promotion assistance, and lifelong learning opportunities are needed (Toropova et al., 2021).

Therefore, eliminating the shortage of labor skills by improving working conditions is a complex and strategically important task. In addition to helping to solve the problem of labor shortage, it also contributes to the long-term growth of the organization, increases its attractiveness for potential employees and helps to cultivate a favorable perception of the employer. Such actions are necessary to maintain stable economic development and remain competitive in the face of growing demand for qualified personnel.

## 4. Discussion

The potential for better laws regarding better working conditions can play an important role in addressing the shortage of skilled labor, making occupations more attractive, and helping to keep experts in place.

Sweden is one of the countries with the most striking examples of improved regulation of working hours. In some parts of the country, a six-hour working day was introduced. For example, for two years, workers in a nursing home in Gothenburg worked six hours a day and received a full salary. The results obtained indicate an increase in labor productivity, an increase in the level of employee satisfaction, and a decrease in the number of sick leave. Legislation that includes such approaches helps reduce stress and create a sense of happiness in the workplace that will help retain skilled workers.

The Netherlands is another European country where laws protect workers' rights to flexible working hours. This allows people to work from home and change the start and end times of the working day. This strategy promotes a healthy work-life balance and is especially important for those with family responsibilities. When such rules are adopted, it may attract more candidates to certain professions, especially when there is a labor shortage (Fajaryati et al., 2020).

Germany plays an important role in maintaining the stability of the labor market. Numerous social guarantees, including health insurance, pensions, and paid leave, are laid out in German law. For example, all German workers are entitled to paid parental leave of up to 14 months in addition to a minimum of 20 days of paid leave annually. This level of social security makes employment more attractive, reduces the outflow of workers, and encourages long-term retention of qualified specialists.

Under a government initiative, workers in Finland have the right to lifelong free education and professional development. The right to paid study leave is guaranteed by legislation for employees in Finland, which encourages professional mobility and improves qualifications. This allows Finns to quickly adapt to changes in the labor market, which reduces the likelihood of labor shortages in certain industries. This approach, for example, has proved successful in the field of information technology, where skills and knowledge needs are constantly changing (Taheri et al., 2020).

The retention of workers is positively affected by the powerful protection of workers' rights provided for by French law. The French Labor Code, in particular, provides reliable protection against illegal dismissal and offers significant compensation to employees whose rights are violated. For example, in the case of wrongful dismissal, the employer is obliged to compensate the employee's salary for 20 months.

This degree of protection increases business confidence and guarantees job security, which is important for solving the problem of skilled labor.

Several governments have also encouraged employers to improve working conditions with tax incentives. For example, companies in the UK that are engaged in advanced training of workers or accept flexible working hours are entitled to a system of tax credits. Such actions help to create conditions that attract people to certain professions, especially in areas with high competition, where there is a shortage of labor (Shao et al., 2020).

As a result, there are many opportunities to improve working conditions through law, ranging from expanding social guarantees to reducing working hours and promoting lifelong learning. Empirical evidence from several countries shows that these modifications can significantly increase the attractiveness of careers and help in retaining skilled workers. Similar legislative measures introduced in other countries improve the labor market, accelerate economic growth, and reduce labor shortages in important industries.

## 5. Conclusions

One important strategy to address the shortage of skilled labor is to improve working conditions. Increasing working hours, offering flexible hours, reducing the working week, and the possibility of remote work - all significantly increases the productivity and happiness of employees, while reducing the level of stress and exhaustion. At the same time, enhanced social security payments such as health insurance, retirement savings, more vacation time, and wellness initiatives increase employee loyalty and reduce churn. The adoption of such a policy increases the attractiveness of professions, which is extremely important in the absence of competent workers, and also increases the long-term stability and competitiveness of business.

Companies that make investments to provide comfortable working conditions and broad social packages have a significant advantage in attracting and retaining skilled workers in today's competitive labor market. In addition to increasing the level of happiness and productivity of employees, the modernization of working premises, the introduction of advanced technologies, and ensuring security support the long-term stability and growth of the organization. Improving working conditions is becoming a crucial strategic goal for maintaining competitiveness and successful corporate development in the EU, where demographic shifts and increased labor rivalries require new methods.

Therefore, there is a good chance that the laws regarding the improvement of working conditions will improve, which will help solve the problem of lack of skilled labor. Real-life cases from Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, France, and the UK show how the introduction of flexible working hours, shorter working hours, increased social guarantees, and encouragement to study throughout life all contribute to the growth of professions, attracting and retaining specialists. The implementation of such legislative measures stimulates economic growth, stabilizes the labor market, and reduces labor shortages in important industries.

Opportunities for future research into improving working conditions to address skills shortages include examining the impact of different work schedules, social safeguards, and ongoing training on employee retention. To find best practices, it is important to assess how successful legislative measures have been in other countries and to examine the long-term impact of better working conditions on professional advancement. In addition, to support strategic planning, it is necessary to create models to predict labor market fluctuations.

These studies will help to understand how better working conditions contribute to the growth of the organization and solve the problem of lack of skilled labor.

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