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**DEVELOPMENT OF WORK ABILITY
MANAGEMENT**
Case: City of Mikkeli

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ABSTRACT

The background of the research was the concern found in the commissioning party's organization about the occupational wellbeing and work ability of the employees. As a result, the organization started a project called TYKKI which is related to promoting working ability management.

The objectives of the thesis were to find out the current state of the occupational wellbeing and working ability of the commissioning party's employees and to produce development proposals on how the working ability management could be improved as part of the TYKKI project.

Quantitative and qualitative methods were both utilized in the research to achieve the most comprehensive view of the current state. A two-part survey was used which included both a quantitative and a qualitative method. Processing the research results was time-consuming but it gave a versatile and comprehensive understanding of the current state.

It was found that the level of occupational wellbeing had slightly improved from the previous year, but development was still required. Development was especially needed in the development of organization of work and earlier intervention in the problems of individuals and work communities through more open interaction. Development proposals were given especially for developing the management skills of superiors which support the TYKKI project.

Keywords: work ability, occupational wellbeing, work ability management, occupational wellbeing management

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1 INTRODUCTION

More and more attention is being paid to wellbeing at work though the history of occupational wellbeing goes back a hundred years (Manka, 2016, 64). The main reason for this is that working life, including the content of the work, ways of doing work, working environment and workforce are challenged constantly. The way that working life is and how employees are doing, affect not only employees' wellbeing but also the productivity and competitiveness of an organization. All these together also affect the social sustainability of the society. (Sauni, 2019, 10.)

Currently, the work ability management is at an interesting turning point. Three years ago, a worldwide pandemic was shaping the work environment, causing the health sector to experience an increasing shortage of staff. Right after this, the war affecting the entire global economy created uncertainty and forced to adapt to a situation that no one wished to happen. At the same time, the spread of hybrid work has brought its own challenges to managing occupational wellbeing. (Työkyvyn johtaminen Suomessa vuonna 2022, 2022, 5.) Lari Malmberg, a reporter for Helsingin Sanomat states that the Finnish welfare state is drifting into a crisis (Malmberg, 2022).

The topic of the thesis is development of working ability management, and the commissioning party of the thesis is City of Mikkeli. City of Mikkeli is currently running a project called TYKKI which is related to promoting working ability management. The TYKKI project was created based on the city's challenging situation, which dates back to several years. Mikkeli is threatened to become a crisis municipality and financial challenges have been solved through repeated cooperation negotiations.

In addition to the financial challenges and scarce resources, the COVID-19 pandemic has also caused a significant load on the staff. Over recent years, absences due to illnesses have increased and there is a shortage of skilled staff. The attractiveness of the city of Mikkeli as an employer has weakened. Due to the constant uncertainty, it has become more common that employees apply

elsewhere. According to the 2021 personnel report, the results of both the Pulssi occupational wellbeing survey and the QWL index have decreased.

The objective of the TYKKI project is to create a basis for the use of work ability management and to train superiors in predictive and caring work ability management. The goal is to reverse the negative downward trend and improve the staff's work ability and wellbeing at work with concrete measures. This manifests itself in the improvement of the results of occupational wellbeing surveys, a reduction in sick leaves, and lower disability costs. In addition, the results of the TYKKI project can be seen in the way the staff feels that they are genuinely cared for.

This thesis is executed as a part of the TYKKI project. The objectives of the thesis are to find out the current state of the occupational wellbeing and working ability of the City of Mikkeli's employees and to produce development proposals on how the working ability management could be improved. The research plays an essential role in TYKKI project, and therefore the results are highly meaningful to City of Mikkeli. The improved work ability management results in improved occupational wellbeing of staff, decreased sick leaves, and finally to the financial results of the city. To achieve the goals, the research should answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How is the work ability management perceived at the moment?

RQ2: Which areas of occupational wellbeing need the most development?

RQ3: How could work ability be improved in a concrete way?

The research will use a two-part occupational wellbeing survey, targeted to the staff of City of Mikkeli. The research will be carried out using quantitative and qualitative methods. In the quantitative section, a multiple-choice survey will be used. The same survey has already been used in the organization in previous years. The layout of the questions is based on enabling the measurement of the QWL index. The survey will be the same as in previous years, but the wording of the questions will slightly be updated by the occupational wellbeing specialist and

the writer of the thesis. However, the city's occupational wellbeing specialist has the responsibility to decode the data of the results of the quantitative survey into Excel tables.

The qualitative section, on the other hand, will focus on finding out, through open questions, the employees' current experiences of the state of wellbeing and work ability. In addition, it will be asked which benefits/rewards the employees hope that the employer would invest in to promote the work ability/wellbeing at work. Forming the qualitative questions is the thesis writer's responsibility in cooperation with the occupational wellbeing specialist and the HR director. Organizing and analyzing the open answers is entirely the thesis writer's responsibility.

The research includes some limitations. Wellbeing surveys are implemented for the staff of City of Mikkeli which includes around 2050 employees. Due to the significance of the TYKKI project, all the employees of City of Mikkeli are included in the research as requested by the commissioning party. The results of the quantitative survey are compared to the results of the previous 3 years' (2019-2021). This enables comparison of any possible changes in results. The experiences of occupational wellbeing of the employees of City of Mikkeli are examined in the dimensions that the surveys deal with. The work ability management is examined from the superior's management point of view, excluding the city's executive management team.

This thesis is significant for the city of Mikkeli, because it provides a knowledge-based analysis of how the wellbeing and work ability of the employees could be improved by developing the work ability management. With this, it is possible to promote the city's employees' wellbeing and ability to work, attraction and retention, and reduce the number of sick leaves. In the long run, all of these will balance the costs caused by the city's employees and for its part brings relief to the challenging financial situation.

The research does not only benefit the commissioning party. As already stated at the beginning, the work ability management is currently in a transition phase. Investing in it now requires a lot of work. The more the subject is discussed, studied and experiments are carried out, the easier it will be to invest in it in the future. For this reason, this research is also important in the industry in general, because some other parties can also get tips from this to develop their own organization's work ability management. Surely, other cities will follow Mikkeli's example.

2 OCCUPATIONAL WELLBEING

In the first theory chapter, the occupational wellbeing is introduced. Since there are several different definitions of occupational wellbeing, the key definitions are presented. After that, a closer look at different dimensions of occupational wellbeing is taken. Occupational wellbeing has also provisions set by law, so they are also reviewed in this theory chapter.

2.1 Key definitions of occupational wellbeing

Aura et al. (2016, 18) state: "The challenges of the occupational wellbeing phenomenon are its multifacetedness and dozens of definitions from different parties". For this reason, the concepts of occupational wellbeing and work ability contain overlap in this thesis as well.

Even Marjut Manka, occupational wellbeing researcher, and Marja-Liisa Manka, who has served as Finland's only professor of occupational wellbeing at the University of Tampere for 11 years, state that the concept of occupational wellbeing is strange when viewed globally. The reason for that is that it is usually associated with occupational health and work ability. However, the Finnish concept of occupational wellbeing also includes the flow of work in everyday life. This is influenced by the organization's operating and management methods, the atmosphere, the work itself, and the employees with their personal interpretations. In addition to this, workplaces can create their own definitions of what occupational wellbeing means at their workplace. (Manka et al. 2016, 75.)

However, Manka et al. (2016, 76-77) define occupational wellbeing through a five-part model of the factors which form the whole of occupational wellbeing. The first factor is an organization which should enable goal orientation, a flexible structure, continuous development, and a functional work environment. The second factor is work management which covers the work's influence possibilities, the versatility of the content, and new learning opportunities. The third factor of the model is management which should be inclusive and encouraging. The fourth factor is the working community which should foster open interaction and work-community skills. The fifth factor, which is at the center of the model, is the employee. It includes health, physical and mental condition. (Manka et al. 2016, 76-77.)

The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (n.d.) in turn describes occupational wellbeing through Work Ability House (figure 1) which was created by professor Juhani Ilmarinen. It can be stated that it includes similar factors as Manka et al. (2016) have defined.

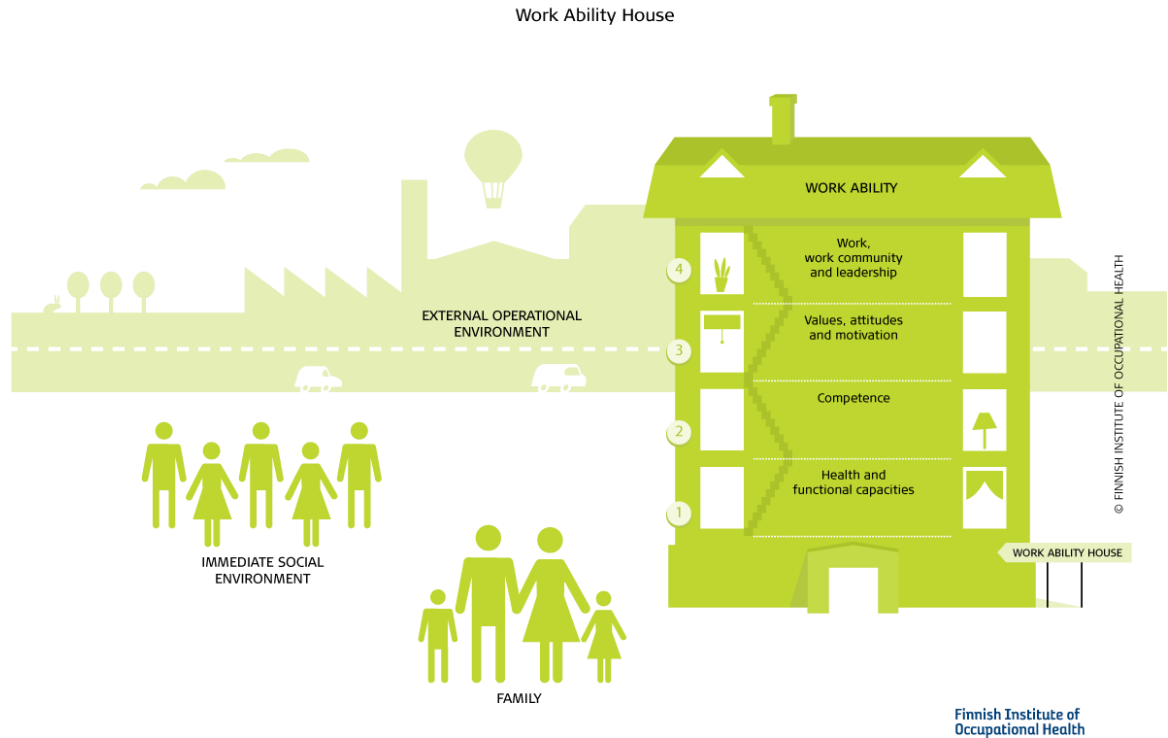


Figure 1. Work Ability House by The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (n.d.).

The work ability consists of four factors from which the first three ones are individual's personal resources, and the fourth factor is a combination of work, working conditions, and management. The first factor, health and functional capacities, describe how an employee's health is the base of the work ability. All physical, psychological, and social dimensions of health together form that. The second factor is competence which includes the employee's knowledge and skills. In the third factor, working life and personal life meet, because it includes the employee's values, attitudes, and motivation. The fourth factor describes the workplace, including work, working conditions, the work community, and the management culture of the organization. (The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.)

In addition to these four factors, work ability is influenced by the family, social environment, and society. The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (n.d.) claims: "Responsibility for an individual's ability to work is shared between the individual, the company, and society."

2.2 Dimensions of occupational wellbeing

The work ability house (figure 1) describes well how occupational wellbeing extends to many different areas, from the individual to the surrounding society. Next, the dimensions are discussed in more detail.

Health and functional capacities

In both definitions presented of occupational wellbeing, an individual's physical and mental health is the basis of everything. A healthy lifestyle supports especially the physical aspect of occupational wellbeing. It includes sufficient and high-quality sleep, regular and varied exercises, and healthy eating habits. In addition to these, alcohol, smoking, and other intoxicants should be avoided. (The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.)

An individual's psychological aspect of occupational wellbeing can be viewed with the model of emotional dimensions of occupational wellbeing. The model for this was originally created by Russel (1980). Mäkikangas et al. (2017) open the different factors and meanings of the model. Manka et al. (2016, 109) discuss also a similar model and they call it the vitamin model. Figure 2 is used to visualize the model of emotional dimensions of occupational wellbeing.

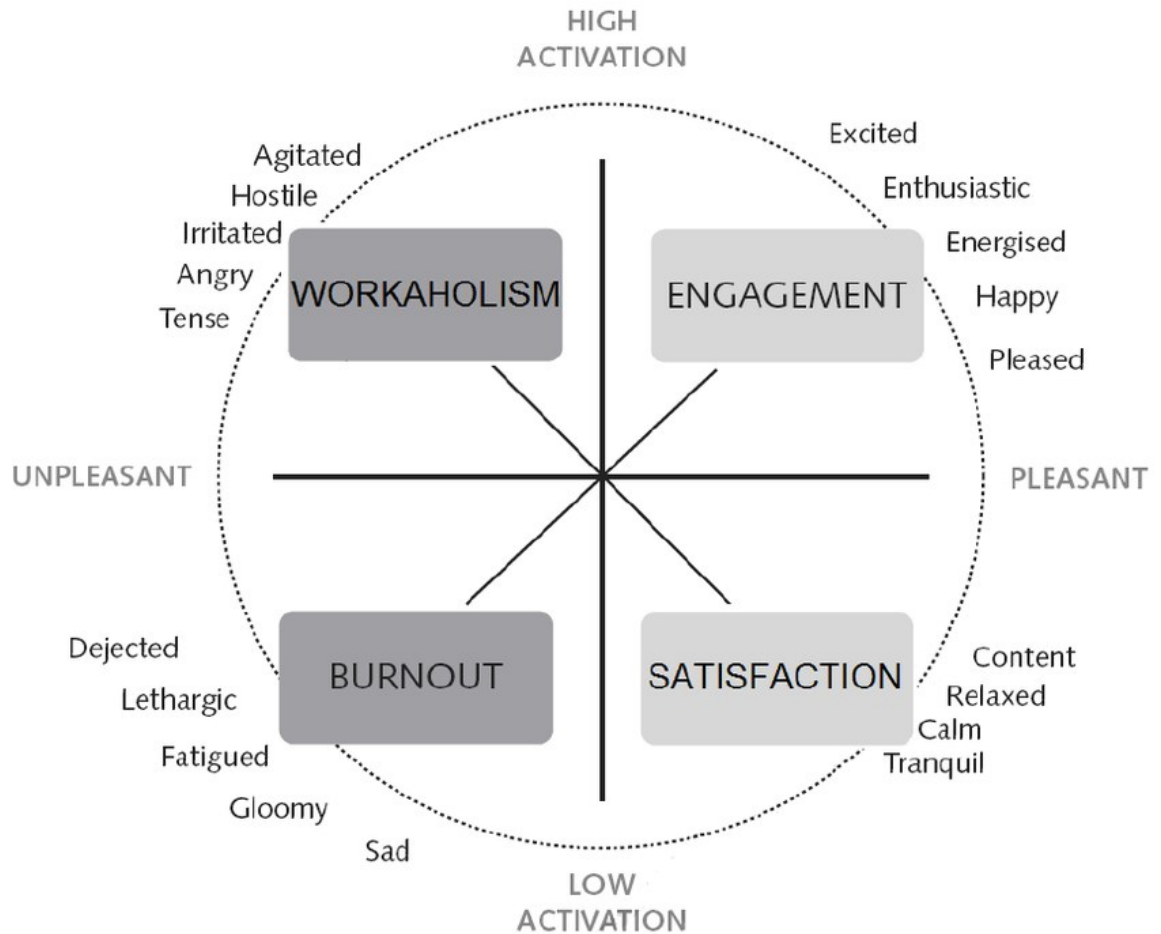


Figure 2. A two-dimensional view of work-related SWB, adapted from Russel 1980 (Research Gate, 2011).

The model is based on two different axes, the horizontal which is pleasure, and the vertical which is activity. Different emotional experiences are based on these dimensions. It can be roughly said that the states of engagement and satisfaction lead to positive consequences, while the states of workaholism and burnout lead to negative consequences. Understanding the different experiences of occupational wellbeing is important for the employee, manager, work community, and to close ones. (Mäkikangas et al. 2017, 104 & 117.) Noticing the different characteristics of the experiences can help one to react to the situation before it gets worse. Mäkikangas et al. (2017, 169-188) have also brought up how the characteristics of a person's personality can have an effect on the psychological side of occupational wellbeing.

Since information work has become more common and has thus significantly affected working life, a new term, information ergonomics, has started to appear. Today, various information technologies are commonplace. Employees must deal with so many different information tools and channels daily that the employee's ability to manage them is insufficient. Information overload affects negatively wellbeing, attention span, work productivity, and memory. It easily causes a loss of sense of control. Although working life requires constant processing of information, brain researchers have at the same time stated that the human ability to process it has not changed over time. This creates a clear contradiction. For this reason, Tampere University's research on information ergonomics aims to promote occupational wellbeing by optimizing the information load. (Manka et al. 2016, 113-115.)

An important part of occupational wellbeing is recovery. Manka et al. (2016, 182) state: "Attention must be paid to recovery every day because a person doesn't have a battery that can be charged for the whole year during vacation." They emphasize the importance of recovery moments throughout the day.

Competence

The second factor of the Work Ability House is competence. It includes education and professional skills. However, an important part of it is so-called lifelong learning, the importance of which has been particularly emphasized in recent years, because the world's economic situation and requirements are changing faster and faster. (The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d. & Benasso et al. 2022, 2.) This is also stated in Sitra's recent Megatrends 2023 report, which predicts that the importance of lifelong learning will become even stronger in the future. One reason to that is the lengthening of working careers. (Dufva & Rekola, 2023.)

It is good to note that learning requires flexible use of time, open interaction, and a favorable atmosphere. Therefore, for example, the coffee table discussions of the work community are more important than perhaps realized. In other words,

being in a hurry, closed-mindedness, and a negative atmosphere hinder learning. (Manka et al. 2016, 88.)

Values, attitudes, and motivation

The employee's own attitudes are important. The employee's own bad feelings can create a different image of the environment, even if things would formally be in order in the work community. (Manka et al. 2016, 76-77.) On the other hand, work ability is strengthened if the work is perceived as meaningful and challenging enough. Age affects motivational factors through different life situations and retirement. (The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.)

It would be ideal if an employee's motivation was internal. In this case, it means that work tasks are done out of one's own inner desire instead of being forced from the outside and thus being less motivating. However, the internal motivation cannot be forced, but it can be helped to be found, for example, through different stories. It is also good to note that what a person does is not only influenced by motivational factors, but also by biological, cultural, and situational factors. (Luukka, 2019, 143-145.)

It also matters whether the employee's personal and organizational values meet each other. Rantama's story can be considered a good practical example. She told how the lack of a value important to her, openness, in the organization's values eventually led her to burnout. (Rantama, 2021.)

Work, work community, and leadership

The fourth section of The Work Ability House is diverse because it includes the working community and working conditions. A functioning work community consists of, among other things, taking care of one's own tasks, respectful manners, interest in colleagues and their work, and smooth cooperation and interaction. Working conditions mean, for example, working tools and healthy work ergonomics. The employer also has many responsibilities defined by law to

take care of the safety of the work environment. In this part, superior work and management play also an important role. (Manka et al. 2016, 90-91 & The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.) Management from a superior's point of view and role is examined in more detail in the next theory section. The upper management level in turn is not focused on in this research.

Self-esteem

Kesti deals with occupational wellbeing through slightly different dimensions. He bases his theory on one's self-esteem. Self-esteem consists of physical and emotional security, belonging and identity, and purpose and creativity. These factors come from Maslow's hierarchy of needs. When the factors of employees' self-esteem are noticed, it accelerates the organization's learning and the group innovativeness, while also improving occupational wellbeing and productivity. From this starting point, he has created his Quality of Working Life theory. (Kesti 2016, 86-87.)

The most critical part of self-esteem and the foundation of everything is physical and emotional safety. Kesti (2014, 86) claims "Physical and emotional safety must always be in order. If they fail, occupational wellbeing and productivity are lost.". He elaborates that if the factors of physical and emotional safety are not implemented, they also negatively affect motivation and coping at work. This can be seen, for example, when cooperation procedures are initiated, which has taken place in the case of the commissioning party. Uncertainty about one's position causes employees to focus on negative things, which leads to a decrease in organizational productivity, and which requires a long recovery period. (Kesti, 2016, 86-87.) Manka et al. (2016, 55) also state that uncertainty reduces wellbeing, which is why it would be important for employers to strive to hold on to their staff.

After the explanations of the dimensions of occupational wellbeing, it is easier to understand the definition of occupational wellbeing by Kesti (2014, 86). He states that the opposite of occupational nausea is not occupational wellbeing, but it is

non-occupational nausea. So, eliminating occupational nausea does not bring much-needed added value. Added value is created when the basics are kept in order and, in addition, investment is made in the motivation and wellbeing of the staff.

2.3 Legal regulations

Legal regulations form an important basis for enabling occupational well-being, as their purpose is to improve the working environment and working conditions (Paanetoja, 2021, 143). For their part, they create proactive safeguarding and maintenance of the employee's ability to work. Only when they are in order can other areas of work ability management be developed.

Occupational safety laws vary between different countries. For that reason, how the law related to the occupational wellbeing works in Finland, is reviewed in this part. In Finland, the employer has a general duty of care. It includes both job characteristics and employees' personal factors that affect work. However, sometimes unusual conditions that are out of employers' control may arise, and those usually are excluded from the employer's duty of care. Mutually, the duty of an employee is to follow the employer's instructions and rules and to take care of a safe and healthy working environment. An employee still has a right to refuse work that could cause serious danger. (Työturvallisuuslaki 738/2002.)

To enable a safe and healthy working environment, an employer must have an occupational safety action strategy. That strategy works as a base for creating goals to improve health and safety and how to maintain work ability. Those things must be discussed when developing and planning work. Employees and their representatives must be aware of them. (Työturvallisuuslaki 738/2002.) Even though occupational wellbeing in the workplace is the responsibility of both the employer and the employee, the final responsibility for it basically rests with the management and superiors (Minilex, n.d.).

Occupational health care is part of the legal regulations of occupational wellbeing and health. It is defined in the Occupational Health Care Act 138/2001. All

employees, regardless of the quality and duration of an employment relationship, are entitled to it. (Occupational Safety and Health Administration, n.d.) Its goal is to enable a healthy and safe working environment, to prevent illnesses related to work, and to maintain and promote employees' work and operational abilities (Occupational Health Care Act 138/2001). In addition to preventive occupational health care, an employer can voluntarily offer medical care, which usually includes general practitioner-level medical care and other occupational health-focused medical care (Kela, n.d.). Since the National Pension Service reimburses a larger share of preventive occupational health care costs, it is also financially profitable to invest in it (Työturvallisuuskeskus, 2015,1:1).

3 OCCUPATIONAL WELLBEING MANAGEMENT

Managing occupational wellbeing is a broad concept that applies to many different areas of an employer. For that reason, in this research, it has been decided to limit the topic so that the management of occupational wellbeing is examined mainly from the superior's perspective. In this theory chapter, occupational wellbeing management is viewed through the management of superiors, and how an early support model is part of occupational wellbeing management. At the end, current issues of the topic are examined.

3.1 Management by superior

Superiors should be aware of their own role and why it exists. In an organization, the role of the superior should be clearly described, and the superiors should be ready to commit themselves to the role. If there is no willingness or ability to commit, it should be questioned whether the person in question should work in other positions. (Luukka, 2019, 317-318.)

Regardless of the organization, superiors have many tasks and responsibilities in their role. As representatives of an organization, their task is to guide the employees according to the common rules toward the organization's goals. This can be classified as a strategic mission. In addition to that, there are operational tasks, such as encouraging and motivating employees, noticing strengths, taking

care of working conditions, addressing work ability challenges, and taking care of employees' skills. In addition to all this, they must interact with several different parties such as management, shop stewards, occupational health care, and potential customers. (Työkykyjohtamisen käsikirja, 2017, 37.)

With good performance, a superior can promote factors of occupational wellbeing among the employees, in which case it is also reflected in the superior's workload in a positive way (Finnish institute of occupational health, n.d.). The good performance of a superior is interactive and is implemented with a positive management approach. Hereby a superior can get more out of the work community than what individual employees would have to give. However, a superior's job is really challenging because it includes expectations and goals from different parties, sometimes even opposites. (Finnish institute of occupational health, n.d. & Kesti, 2014.)

In order for the superior to be able to support employees' wellbeing and promote their productivity as well as possible, they must invest in the following things. First of all, they need to be genuine and honest. Those make the base for creating trust between employees and a superior. Superiors should be humble enough to receive feedback and accept their own mistakes if any. Mutually, superiors should accept their employee's mistakes and process them together with the person concerned. Accepting and dealing with each other's mistakes enables development. Compassion is also an important characteristic of a superior: it enables one to recognize people's differences and act accordingly. For example, different individuals get motivated in different ways, so it would be good to know how to encourage everyone in ways that suit them. Superiors bear great responsibility for the management of entities, including the work community's wellbeing and safety, organizing, and agreeing on goals. Thus, it does not remain unclear that good situational awareness, human understanding, and the ability to work in a constantly changing environment are required from the superior. (Finnish institute of occupational health.n.d. & Kesti, 2014.)

A common mistake is that a superior is chosen by the scope of job skills instead by the ability of leadership. In the end, the superior's main work task is to lead people. However, superiors can and should be educated regularly. Aura et al. (2016) state that the strong inclusion of occupational wellbeing in the training of superiors promotes the implementation of many superior processes. This claim is based on their research about strategic wellbeing management in 2009-2014. One of the results of the study was that the strong inclusion of occupational wellbeing in the training of superiors was reflected positively in the superiors' abilities, as well as in the work ability, atmosphere, and finances. That being said, it is easier to understand also another claim that their study included. They refer to the project of South Savo Occupational Wellbeing Academy implemented in 2015-2016, supported by the ELY Center, which involved 20 organizations from the public and private sectors. In the mapping of its initial situation, it became clear that the superiors' operating methods and the employees' perceived wellbeing at work were significantly correlated (correlation coefficient $r = 0.86$). The studies confirm that how superiors are trained and how they lead their employees affects wellbeing at work.

Similar results were obtained in the study of work ability management carried out by Smartum. It stated that the management level of the entire organization's occupational wellbeing is determined by the superiors. Their management skills and the courage to address the challenges of work ability at an early stage mean a lot. In the results of the study, it was also stated that other investments made for work ability will not save the whole if the superiors' work ability management skills are not in order. A superior's own example also has a great effect, because if they downplay the importance of occupational wellbeing, then employees also have a greater threshold to invest in it. (Työkyvyn johtaminen Suomessa vuonna 2022, 2022, 10.)

3.2 An early support model

What comes to the role of a superior, an early support model is part of it. However, it is collaboration between many parties; employer, occupational health care, and employees (The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.). The

basic idea of the early support model is that the employee's symptoms and illnesses would be noticed as early as possible and thus treatment, rehabilitation measures and possible corrections of working conditions would be started in a timely manner. It would be good especially for employees to understand that early support is about caring, offering help, and equal treatment.

(Työturvallisuuskeskus, 2015, 1:3.)

The model of early support must be defined and written down for each company and each party must be clear about how it works. Its prerequisite is clear information, familiarization, and development of habits as needed. After each party is aware of the practices, everyone must commit to them. (The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.) When designing and implementing the model of early support, compliance with the law and ethics must be considered.

(Työturvallisuuskeskus, 2015,1:1.)

Examples of signals that may indicate a decline in a working capacity are deterioration of work performance, repeated or prolonged sick leaves, extended working days, carelessness, lack of motivation, and withdrawal. The reasons for these signals can, in turn, be physical and psychological illnesses, substance abuse problems, excessive workload at work, issues related to aging, and work management problems to name a few. (Työturvallisuuskeskus, 2015, 1:2.)

In organizations, it is recommended to define limit values related to sick leaves and the measures that belong to them and connect them to the early support model. Their purpose is to help detect threats related to work ability. Examples of limits can be repeated short sick leaves in a specified period or longer sick leaves, which can be divided into continuous and cumulative. When the limit values are met, the necessary measures are taken through the early support discussion. It is important to create and follow consistent practices to enable trust and fairness. (The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.)

When the need to intervene in the employee's ability to work has been noticed, peaceful placement for conversation should be chosen as well enough time. (The

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.) There are challenges with taking an initiative to intervene. It is not easy nor comfortable to interfere in someone's personal affairs. For that reason, superiors should be well educated to have the tools and courage to do so because it is part of their daily work (Työturvallisuuskeskus, 2015, 1:1).

When the weakening of work ability has been detected and the issue has been addressed through a discussion, temporary or permanent arrangements can be made as necessary and possible. Ways to promote work ability include work reorganization, work rotation, rehabilitation, the possibility of using partial sickness allowance, part-pension solutions, and improving ergonomics. (Työturvallisuuskeskus, 2015, 1:2.)

Figure 3 presents the early support steps mentioned from a superior's point of view. It was created by Ilmarinen, a Finnish employment pension company.

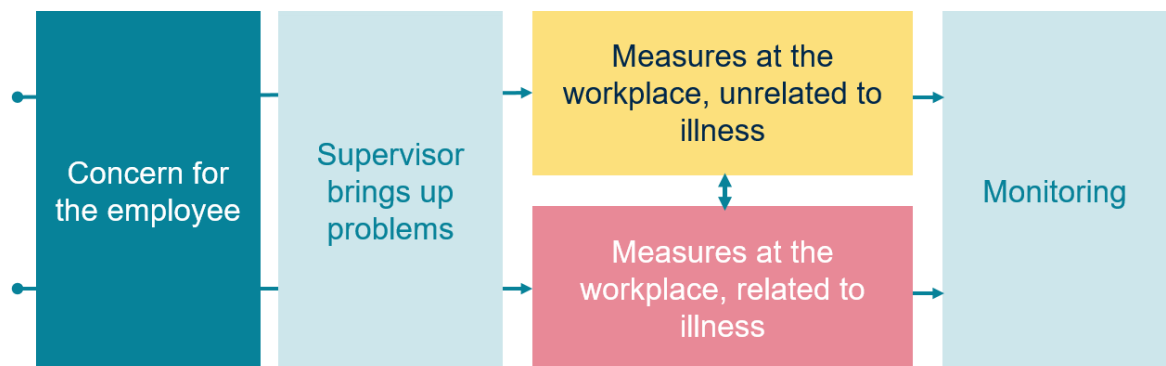


Figure 3. Process of early support model from superior's point of view (Ilmarinen, n.d.).

Ilmarinen has highlighted the importance of monitoring in its process of early support model (figure 3). As important as it is to take actions to promote work ability, it is equally important to monitor whether the actions have any effect. Regular and open conversation with employees is the best way to stay informed about what is going on with them. It is valuable to share the superior's own proven ways with the person who is responsible for the company's early support activities. In this way, proven practices can be utilized throughout the organization. (Ilmarinen n.d.)

The early support model does not only apply at work, but it is also part of a return-to-work process when an employee comes back to work after a long break. At this point, the superior's role is key when the return is facilitated, and possible arrangements are made regarding the work. To ensure that the employee would not feel excluded, and it would be easier to return to the workplace after a long sick leave, it would be good for the superior to keep in touch even during the absence. It communicates care and interest and gives the employee the opportunity to participate in planning the return to work.

(Työturvallisuuskeskus, 2015, 1:8.) The support given by superiors is connected to better mental health of employees and a faster return to work after a long sick leave (Kelloway et al. 2017, 157). It would be good to plan the return to work well in advance so that the employee can prepare for possible changes in the workplace. In certain cases, contact can also be considered with occupational health, if the state of health requires it. (Työturvallisuuskeskus, 2015, 1:8.)

Aura et al. (2016) did research on strategic wellbeing management in Finland. One of the results of the study was that the wellbeing emphasis of the management's strategy work and superiors' training was the most important when looking at the effects of the wellbeing emphasis of different processes on the working methods of early support. The results also showed that the most important thing is the whole rather than individual actors. Here, the whole refers to the cooperation of superiors and occupational health in supporting the return to work. (Aura et al. 2016, 86-87.)

It can be stated that the success of early support is largely based on the fact that the responsibilities of the roles are clearly divided and those concerned have committed to them. In addition, the strategic work of management and the training of superiors should be focused on occupational wellbeing.

Returning back to the example where Rantama burned out due to a conflict of values. The situation led to Rantama making a tearful phone call to her superior and telling him that she doesn't seem to be able to work. The superior reacted to the situation by calling the employee to work to have a talk, taking over her work,

and then taking her to ice swimming. Together, they also taped the employee's working computer and wrote on it the day when it could be opened next time. When it was time to return to work, the employee's duties were rearranged to better suit her. With these actions, the superior conveyed the feeling that he genuinely cared about the employee and wanted her to regain her ability to work. (Rantama, 2021.)

3.3 Occupational wellbeing management in a turning point

As already stated in the introduction, work ability management is at an interesting turning point. Next, current challenges and global trends are taken look at through recent research from different parties.

Hybrid work and leadership

Smartum recently conducted research on the current state of work ability management in Finland. In the research, 15 human resources decision-makers were interviewed, each representing large organizations. When looking at the effects of the pandemic, many HR decision-makers interviewed in the research are of the opinion that the problems brought on will be seen more widely in the future. For this reason, the report of the research emphasizes that in the future, organizations should be prepared for the fact that those who work at home and those who work at the workplace have different work ability challenges and thus need different management. It would also be important to think together with colleagues about how to increase the sense of community. Not everyone can be asked back to work now. (Työkyvyn johtaminen Suomessa vuonna 2022, 2022, 2, 9, 10)

When emphasizing the role of the superior, one might think that what about those organizations where superiors have mainly been abandoned. In them, the responsibility is given to individuals and work communities. A current and criticized way of "leading" is self-direction. It is true that in some organizations it has brought many benefits. Jari Hakanen, a research professor at The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, has studied the effects of self-direction on

occupational wellbeing together with his colleagues. In their research, they have found evidence that employees may feel better with self-direction. However, it is good to note that its implementation is not easy. It may not work in all organizations either. (Niinivuo, 2022.)

Helsingin Sanomat interviewed people who work in organizations where self-direction has been implemented. It emerged from several answers that the management method in question has not worked at all and has rather been a disadvantage. (Niinivuo, 2022.) That is a good example of how putting self-direction into practice is not easy. At the same time, it can be stated that, despite the generalization of the management method in question, in many organizations, superior work is still meaningful and important.

Mental health

Keva studied occupational wellbeing in the public sector in 2022. The results show that the decline in mental resources in many sectors continues. The increased mental health challenges are also brought up in Sitra's Megatrends 2023 report. However, Keva's research director Laura Pekkarinen (2023) states: "Even if the work is mentally demanding, the mental ability to work can remain good if the opportunities to influence one's own work are perceived as good". That statement is supported by Sitra's Megatrends 2023 report's prediction that in the future the opportunity for employees to influence their own job description will be emphasized. (Dufva & Rekola, 2023, Keva, 2023.)

The research carried out by Smartum, on the other hand, brought up an interesting reflection on the prevalence of mental health problems. In it, the interviewee questions whether mental health problems have really increased, or whether people dare to talk about them more openly than before, in which case previous sick leaves due to "back pain" is now classified with a different code. (Työkyvyn johtaminen Suomessa vuonna 2022, 2022, 8.)

The role of occupational health care has expanded in the recent years. Organizations can get more and more detailed data about the overall health status of their staff members. Various preventive services, such as chats, and low threshold psychotherapy services have increased both by occupational health care and by external service providers. Nevertheless, the problem of timely information and lack of intervention has not yet been solved. (Työkyvyn johtaminen Suomessa vuonna 2022, 2022, 13.)

Measuring occupational wellbeing

Occupational wellbeing surveys have become a common way to find out the state of an organization's occupational wellbeing alongside the monitoring of sickness absences. There is a debate about whether it would be more effective to conduct a larger survey 1-2 times a year or shorter surveys more often. Larger surveys implemented 1-2 times a year are good in a way that there is more time to take measures in between. Shorter surveys implemented more often can work well in situations where there are different seasons or rush periods. In that case, they could give the opportunity to address the identified challenges faster and more efficiently. However, surveys that are repeated too often may cause employees to become frustrated with them and thereby they may not respond to them. That creates its own challenge. (Työkyvyn johtaminen Suomessa vuonna 2022, 2022, 13-14.)

One way or another, measuring work ability and occupational wellbeing is challenging. Because of this, many organizations have started to develop more systematic monitoring, for example by developing an early support model. Since so many organizations struggle with these same challenges, it can be expected that more efficient and reliable ways of measuring and evaluating will be developed in the future. It is essential to be aware that if the top management does not have a genuine interest in developing work ability, increasing the measurement will cause frustration instead of benefits. (Työkyvyn johtaminen Suomessa vuonna 2022, 2022, 15-16.)

Corporate wellness market

Statista has created an interesting forecast related to occupational wellbeing (figure 4). In companies, investing in versatile occupational wellbeing is growing, and Statista has estimated that the value of the corporate wellness market will almost double by 2027. In 2021, the market size was measured to be worth 54.1 billion U.S. dollars and the estimate for 2028 is evaluated to be worth 93.3 billion U.S. dollars. (Statista, 2022.)

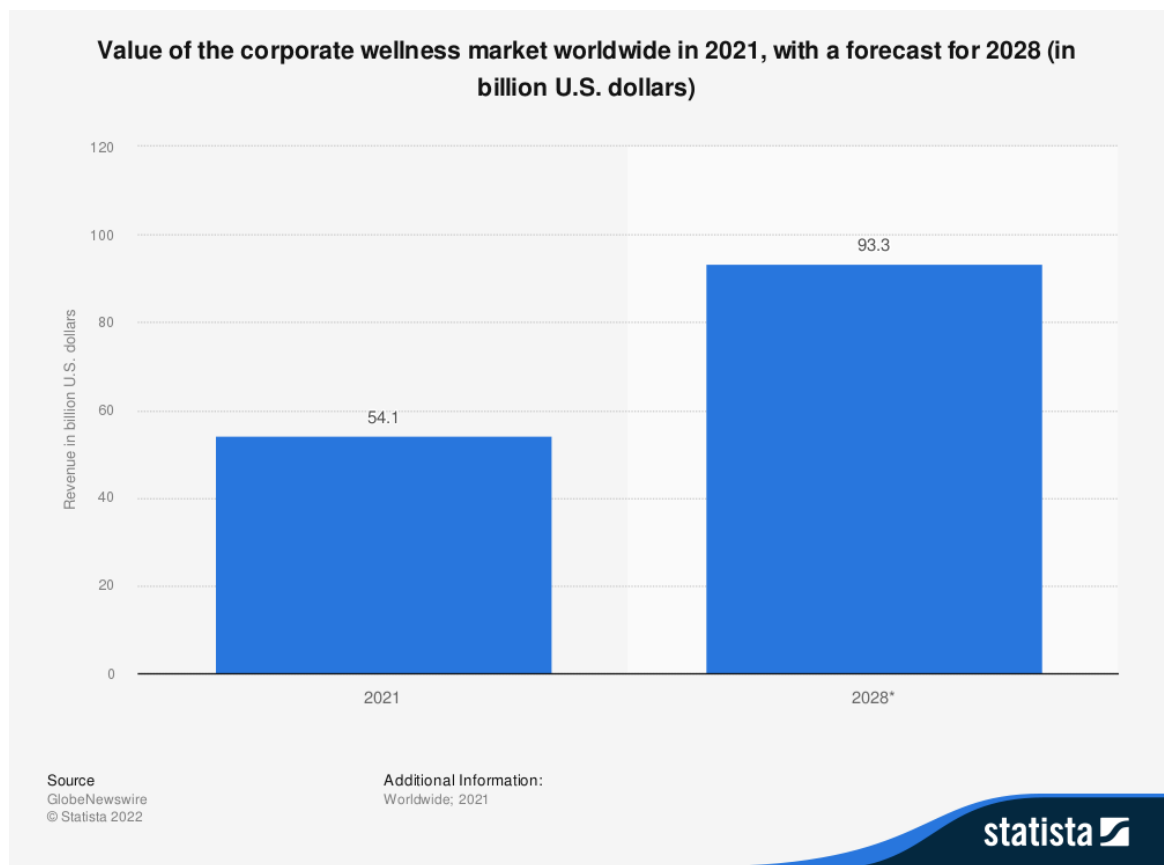


Figure 4. Value of the corporate wellness market worldwide in 2021, with a forecast for 2028 (in billion U.S. dollars) (Statista, 2022).

Figure 4 shows a forecast which is positive, as there are many challenges in managing occupational wellbeing. The more occupational wellbeing services are available, the more likely it is to be improved since managers have more knowledge and tools to use.

Mäkikangas et al. (2017, 120) state: "As the demands and uncertainty of working life increase, how employees feel at work is increasingly important in terms of both the quality of life and health of employees and the success of organizations. -- managing occupational wellbeing is at the best individual, and it is supported by the fact that each employee takes care of themselves at different stages of their working career." Let this serve as an apt summary of the topic.

4 THE CITY OF MIKKELI

Mikkeli is a municipality of around 52 000 inhabitants. It is in the South-Eastern part of Finland, and it is part of the South-Savo region. The city was founded in 1838 and it covers 3 229,57 square kilometers of surface area. The city of Mikkeli is within easy reach, for instance from Helsinki it takes only 2,5 hours to get there. (City of Mikkeli.) The city is surrounded by lakes and hereby it has the second largest number of holiday homes in all of Finland (Visit Mikkeli). That makes it very lively in the summertime.

The commissioning party of the thesis, City of Mikkeli, employs around 2050 employees. The service organization of City of Mikkeli is divided into three service areas: education and welfare service area, housing and operating environment service area, and concern and vitality services service area. The decision-making organization of City of Mikkeli in turn consists of trust bodies and the supreme power is exercised by the council which consists of 51 members.

City of Mikkeli is currently running a project called TYKKI which is related to promoting working ability management. The TYKKI project was created based on the city's challenging situation, which dates back to several years. Mikkeli is threatened to become a crisis municipality and financial challenges have been solved through repeated cooperation negotiations. This has also affected the operations of Human Resources whose role should be to take care of the employee from recruitment to retirement. Lately, HR operations have mainly been focused on reducing the staff, and less resources have been used to promote work ability and wellbeing. Simultaneously, the upper management has also neglected its role in promoting work ability and occupational wellbeing. The fact

that the organization's employees have very different job descriptions, from teachers to lawyers, brings its own challenge to management.

In addition to the financial challenges and scarce resources, the COVID-19 pandemic has also caused a significant load on the staff. Over recent years, absences due to illnesses have increased and there is a shortage of skilled staff. The attractiveness of the city of Mikkeli as an employer has weakened. Due to the constant uncertainty, it has become more common that employees apply elsewhere. According to the 2021 personnel report, the results of both the Pulssi survey and the QWL index have decreased.

The city of Mikkeli has a written occupational wellbeing action program which defines the roles and responsibilities of work ability management. However, the challenge is the implementation of the instructions in practice. The object of the TYKKI project is to create a basis for the use of work ability management, and to train superiors in predictive and caring work ability management. The goal is to reverse the negative downward trend and improve the staff's work ability and wellbeing at work with concrete measures. This manifests itself in the improvement of the results of occupational wellbeing surveys, a reduction in sick leaves, and lower disability costs. In addition, it can be seen in the fact that the staff feels that they are genuinely cared for.

Achieving the goal requires the commitment of the management and superiors, and the development of their skills. The competence of superiors is developed in the project through an external trainer. The goal is that the training provides superiors with the skills to support coping and the courage to intervene in even more difficult matters.

The City of Mikkeli received 11 000 euros funding from Keva for the project. The funding money for the project will be used for the training by an external service provider. Keva.fi defines: "Keva is Finland's largest pension provider, and it administers the pensions of local government, State, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kela, Bank of Finland and new wellbeing services counties employees."

It also offers working life services and research information as a goal to support working ability (Keva). Thus, Keva is a significant partner for City of Mikkeli in promoting work ability and occupational wellbeing.

As another activity supporting the project, the occupational health care of City of Mikkeli was tendered out in the autumn 2022. The new service provider will start its operations on the first of April 2023. This protects the TYKKI project because the cooperation with occupational health care is wanted to be even closer via digital tools. It creates a strong foundation for the early support model because it enables cooperation between occupational health care, HR, and superiors in monitoring and managing the work ability.

5 RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

This chapter introduces which research methods are used and why. In addition, it defines how the data is collected and analyzed. Data security and research ethics will be considered.

5.1 Research approach and methods

Quantitative research is based on a numerical analysis made using statistical programs. It often answers to the questions of how much or how often.

Quantitative research can be used to define general distributions and experiences, and thus gives a general picture of the relationships and differences between the properties being measured. These properties can be for instance various things, characteristics, experiences, or phenomena concerning people, and the goal of quantitative research is to explain, describe, map, predict or compare the related phenomena. (Vilkka, 2021.)

In this research a quantitative method is used in a multiple-choice survey which is in the first part of the questionnaire. It has been used in the commissioning party's organization before, so its results can be compared with the results of previous years, and it gives an overview of the state of occupational wellbeing.

Qualitative research in turn is based on non-numeric interpretation. It is a way to explore the individual's subjective experience more deeply. It can be used to examine, for example, the experiences and meanings of the phenomena of communities. As qualitative research often examines people's experiences and views, individual values, opinions, feelings, and beliefs influence them. The context of the research, such as workplace, event, or situation, also affects how individuals experience the matter and thus what they answer. For this reason, as a researcher, it is important to be aware of the context of the research. The so-called research understanding is also important. It means understanding an individual's subjective experiences and meanings. Understanding is challenging because individuals' experiences are diverse. However, dialogue with one's own thinking, research theory, and research material help with that. It can be stated that the result of qualitative research is always the researcher's own interpretation of the causal connections and meanings of things. For this reason, the importance of objectivity is emphasized in a qualitative research. (Vilkka, 2021.)

In this research, a qualitative research is used to get more in-depth information on the quantitative research results. Open questions are asked in the second part of the survey and through them, the experiences of individuals about the current state of occupational wellbeing and its obstacles are found.

5.2 Data collection

In this research, both the quantitative and qualitative surveys were implemented using the Zeffi online survey platform. The surveys were behind different links, but the links were shared in the same email and intranet info. The links to the surveys were sent by email to each employee working in City of Mikkeli which had around 2050 employees at the time of the survey (the staff of the rescue department is excluded because they will move to the welfare area at the turn of the year). However, there is a chance that some of the employees are not reached because they do not need working email often and they may not follow the City of Mikkeli's internal information channel. Due to that, the total potential number of respondents is estimated to be 2000 people.

Before the survey links were distributed, they were tested with couple of persons inside the organization that they work well. Then the links to the surveys were sent by email (appendix 3) to each employee working for City of Mikkeli. In addition, they were shared in City of Mikkeli's internal information channel Helmi-intra and in the internal newsletter Helminen. The surveys were open for 18 days from 29 September 2022 to 16 October 2022. A reminder email (appendix 5) was sent twice during the answering period. It was an effective way to boost the answer rate because it could be seen in the response chart that always after the reminder was sent, there was a peak in the number of answers. A raffle with good rewards was used as an incentive to answer the survey.

At the beginning of the quantitative survey, there was again text (appendix 4) about what the survey was aiming for and how to answer it. As stated in the covering note, the research results of the quantitative study were not conducted for units with less than 5 employees to protect privacy. The percentage of the respondents to the first and quantitative part of the survey was around 66%, with answers from 1328 people.

At the beginning of the qualitative survey, there was again text (appendix 4) about what the survey was aiming for and how to answer it. The total number of the respondents to the part 2 was 1063 with a response rate of 53%. In total, there were 1553 open answers which the author went through one by one. NVivo was used to organize the data and make it easier to see the most common topics.

Data security and research ethics were considered in the collection and processing of data, considering the following issues which the two first ones are from the research permission of the commissioning party:

1. The research report must not identify the persons who participated in the research.
2. The personal register/research material created in the research is destroyed or archived in the manner required by the Personal Data Act.
3. No need for an ethical pre-assessment in the research is found.
4. The security of the devices used to store the survey data is taken care of so that the information does not end up in the wrong hands.

5. Announcement right at the beginning of the survey to inform that the answers to the survey are used as a summary anonymously in the thesis research of the South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences.
6. In the second part of the survey, there is an option to leave the respondent's contact information for the raffle and in connection with that, it is announced that the contact information will only be used to contact the winners of the raffle.
7. The winners of the lottery are asked for permission to share their names on the organization's intranet.
8. By answering the survey, the person at the same time gives permission for the answers to be processed.
9. The first part of the survey was answered anonymously, so no personal data was processed.

In addition, some information was beneficial from the HR report 2021 and the occupational wellbeing action program 2021-2022. The questions of both surveys are attached at the end of the thesis (appendix 1 & 2).

5.3 Data analysis

A thematic analysis is used in the data analysis. The results of the quantitative research (questionnaire section 1) are compared with the results of the qualitative research (questionnaire section 2). The goal is that, through open-ended answers, explanatory factors can be found for the results of quantitative research. Since the surveys are extensive, the thesis mainly focuses on the results of the superior's role and the individual's work ability and occupational wellbeing, excluding organizational factors. Therefore, analysis of the section *Activities of the employer* in both surveys is excluded from this research.

In quantitative studies, the results are entered into an excel file, where the average, standard deviation, and importance of the answers are calculated for each question. The ready-made four-field composites produced by Zeff are used in the analysis of the results. The answers to the qualitative survey are reviewed individually and categorized according to the headings of the quantitative survey, which makes comparability between the quantitative and qualitative surveys easier. For helping to organize many open answers, NVivo software is used. It is designed to analyze the qualitative data. NVivo software is not yet familiar to the researcher so YouTube tutorials are used to get familiar with its functions.

6 RESULTS

This section reviews the results of the research. The results of the quantitative and qualitative research are examined separately and finally, their commonalities are considered.

As the thesis and thus the research was implemented as part of the author's internship and working period in the commissioning party, some parts of the research were done in collaboration with an occupational wellbeing specialist of City of Mikkeli. Thereby the author was in charge of the qualitative part of the survey, and the occupational wellbeing specialist was in charge of processing the quantitative part by running its results into Excel tables. However, the author made an even more detailed analysis of the results of the quantitative section, utilizing square fields of the answers. Communication from both sides was carried out continuously throughout the process.

6.1 Quantitative questionnaire

The percentage of the respondents to the first and quantitative part of the survey was around 66%, with answers from 1328 people. Table 1 shows the average, standard deviation, and significance of the answers to each claim. When answering to the questions, a square field was used, where points were simultaneously selected for how much one agrees or disagrees (1-5) with the issue, as well as the significance (1-5) of the issue. The score results in each subject area mean: 4–8 points: alarming situation, 9–15 points: moderate situation, and 16–20 points: situation somewhat (16) or completely fine (20). The meaning of the total score, on the other hand, goes as follows: 16–30 points: the situation is alarming, 31–50 points: the situation is moderate, 51–70 points: the situation is satisfactory and over 70 points: the situation is good. In addition to that, the Table 1 shows the multiple-choice claims of the first section of the survey. In reality, the questions were in Finnish, because the vast majority of the commissioning party's organization are Finnish. The questions have thus been translated into English in the presentation of the results.

Table 1. Overview of the results of the quantitative questionnaire.

WORK TASKS AND ONE'S OWN RESOURCES	points	SD	significance
I feel that I am coping well and enjoy my work	3,70	1,00	4,10
I am satisfied with my opportunities to influence my work (e.g. work methods, the pace of work, work content)	3,60	0,90	4,00
I feel that I am in control of my work and my competence is at a sufficient level in relation to the goals and tasks	4,00	0,80	4,20
I have the opportunity for professional development	3,70	1,00	3,90
	15,00		16,20
THE FLOW OF WORK IN THE WORKING COMMUNITY			
We have a good spirit together	3,90	0,90	4,20
We operate in accordance with agreed goals and operating methods	3,80	0,90	4,10
We value each other in the work community (I feel that I am valued, I value others)	3,90	0,90	4,20
We intervene in problems that disturb the work community (e.g. interaction problems) in sufficient time	3,40	1,00	4,10
	15,00		16,60
ACTION OF SUPERIOR			
My superior encourages the development of operations and accepts development ideas	3,80	1,00	4,00
There is trust between the superior and me and the interaction is open	4,10	0,90	4,30
I get enough constructive feedback from my superior	3,60	1,00	4,00
I know that I can get support from my superior if I need (e.g. combining personal life and work life, health, situation of change, failure, challenging customer situation)	4,00	1,00	4,20
	15,50		16,50
ACTIVITIES OF THE EMPLOYER			
My image of City of Mikkeli as an employer is positive	3,00	1,00	3,70
The electronic applications, IT solutions and instructions in use make work easier and unify operations	3,30	1,00	3,80
The strategy and values of City of Mikkeli guide the employer's activities also in relation to the staff	2,90	0,90	3,50
The employer encourages the staff to develop operations	3,10	1,00	3,50
	12,30		14,50

TOTAL	57,80		
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The questions are divided under four main topics which are *Work tasks and one's own resources*, *The flow of work in the working community*, *Action of Superior* and *Activities of the employer*. According to the above-mentioned definitions of the points in Table 1, it can be stated that the situation with all the mentioned subject areas is at a moderate level. It means, that all of them would require development. The overall points situation, on the other hand, which is 57,80, is at a satisfactory level. It also means that it should be developed. However, the positive point is that the result has increased compared to the previous year when it was 55,70. The QWL index was also counted which was 58 %. It has increased from the previous year when it was 55%. The object of City of Mikkeli is to have it at least 60 % (100 % is a maximum).

Figure 5 represents the overview of comparing the results of the scores in the subject areas to the results in the previous three years. What was surprising was that the results were slightly improved in all areas except in "Work tasks and one's own resources". On the other hand, it does not surprise that exactly that section is slightly weakened. Because it was already known before the survey that employees are not doing very well due to, for example, increased sick leaves. When interpreting the results, it must be noted that the questions are partly slightly different compared to the previous year 2021. Efforts have been made to keep comparability the same, but to clarify the questions more precisely.

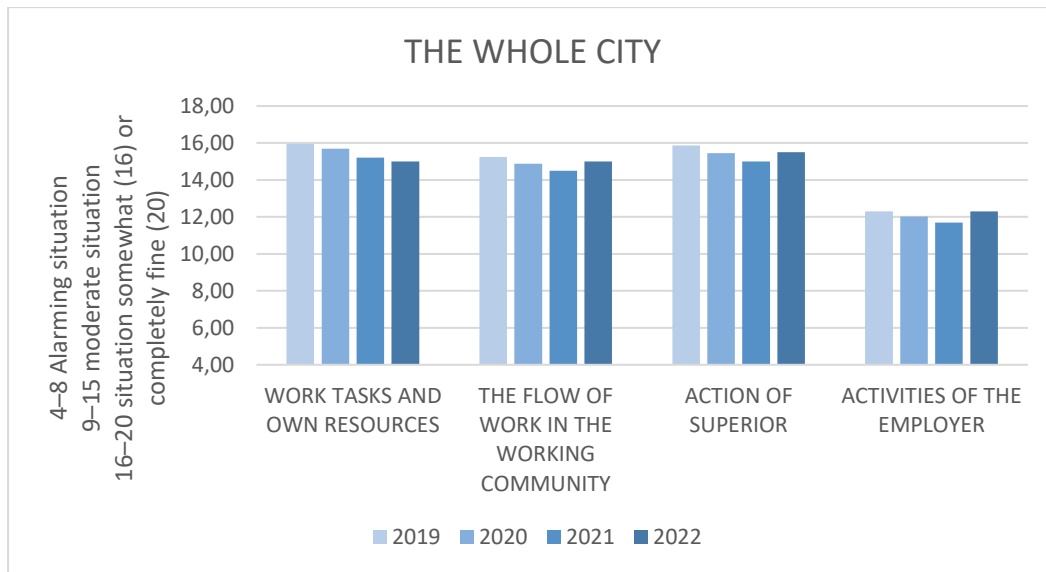


Figure 5. Overview of the results of the quantitative questionnaire compared to the previous years (2019-2022).

The steady decline in the values of the topic *Work tasks and one's own resources* have been affected by several factors (figure 5). On a general level, it could be explained by the fact that the challenges brought by cooperation negotiations, Covid-19, and high employee turnover have weakened the ability of employees to cope as there have been fewer people working on the same tasks as before. There hasn't been enough investment in coping, the organization of work has not been effective, and employees haven't had enough opportunities to influence their work either.

The increase in the values of the topic *The flow of work in the working community* instead is a positive result and could be partly explained by the returning to the workplace instead of working remotely (figure 5). In this way, the employees have been able to see each other more often instead of being in a Teams meeting with the cameras closed, where only work-related issues are discussed. The face mask requirement was also removed in 2022, which can explain the fact that the functioning of work communities is perceived to be better when employees are better able to express facial expressions and do not have to constantly be on their toes about who is allowed to be in the break room at the same time, for example. Now coffee moments can be shared face-to-face without a worry in many work communities. As stated in the theory part of dimensions of occupational wellbeing, the coffee table discussions of work communities can

have a greater positive meaning for the wellbeing of work communities than is known.

The increase in the values of the topic *Action of superior* could be also partly explained by the fact that employees have been able to return to their workplaces instead of doing remote work (figure 5). It has probably enabled seeing one's superior face to face more often which can improve the interaction. At this point, it must be stated that the results of this subject may be distorted. In previous years, the statement "I know that I can get support from my superior if I need" was in the form of "My supervisor supports me in my work". These can be interpreted differently. For the previous year question, it has been possible to think that one can get support from a superior if needed, even if the support is not really visible at work. So, in the minds of the respondents, the statement in question may have focused more on whether the superior supported them in their daily work. However, the main point is that it is mainly experienced that the support it gained if needed. It enables the employee to feel that he or she is not alone with possible problems.

Since the overviews of the results (table 1 & figure 5) do not provide more detailed information or a range, it is better to examine the topics in more detail by means of a few question-specific four-field analyses.

Work tasks and one's own resources

Figure 6 shows the square field about the distribution of answers in the statement *I feel that I am in control of my work and my competence is at a sufficient level in relation to the goals and tasks*. The horizontal axis tells the level of agreement (1–5), and the vertical axis tells the level of significance (1–5) to the respondent. The bluer the square, the more answers there are in that value. At the top, the number of the answers to that question and the number of the answers in the bluest box can be seen.

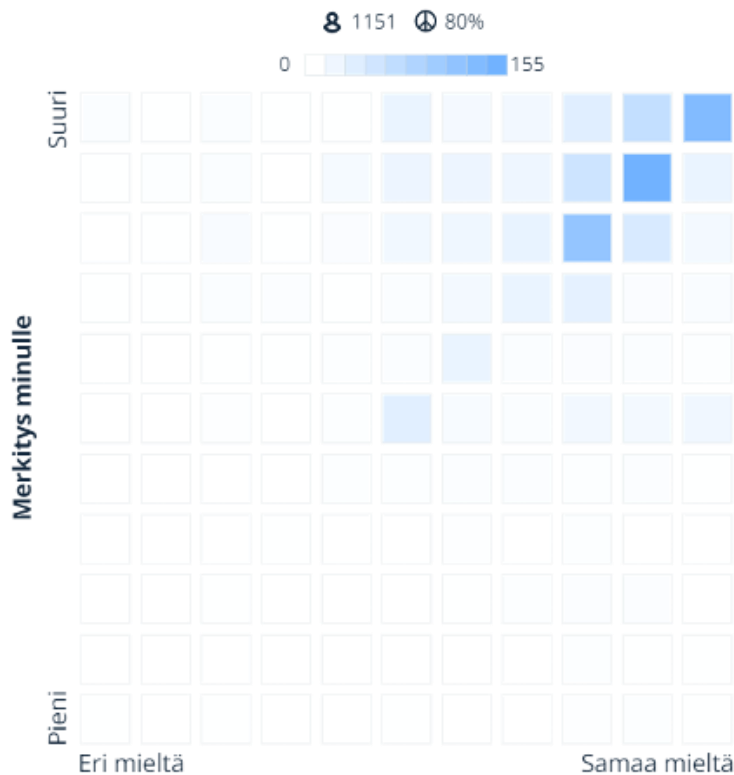


Figure 6. Square field about the distribution of answers in the statement "I feel that I am in control of my work and my competence is at a sufficient level in relation to the goals and tasks".

In Figure 6, the range of the answers is relatively small. Table 1 shows that its points on average are 4,0 with a standard deviation of 0,8, and a significance of 4,2. As can be inferred from the coloring of the square, most of the answers are in the positive area in the upper right corner. If the values of the nine boxes in the upper right corner (the values in both axes are from 4 to 5), i.e. the number of answers, are added together, the result is 641 answers. It is around 56 % of the total number of answers (1151) to the question. It means that the majority of respondents feel that they are in control of their work and that their skills are at a sufficient level. At the same time, the persons in question feel that its implementation is significant.

On the other hand, the claim *I am satisfied with my opportunities to influence my work* has weaker points (3,6) which is partly explained by the larger standard deviation (0.9) (figure 7). The importance is experienced to be great (4.0). If the values of the nine boxes in the upper right corner are added together, the result is 439 answers, which is around 200 answers less than in the previous question.

Based on this, it can be stated that opportunities to influence the work share more opinions. According to many respondents, it is not implemented satisfactorily, and on the other hand, on average, the matter is not considered as important as the level of competence. However, the chance to influence one's work should be improved since it is still mainly perceived as significant.

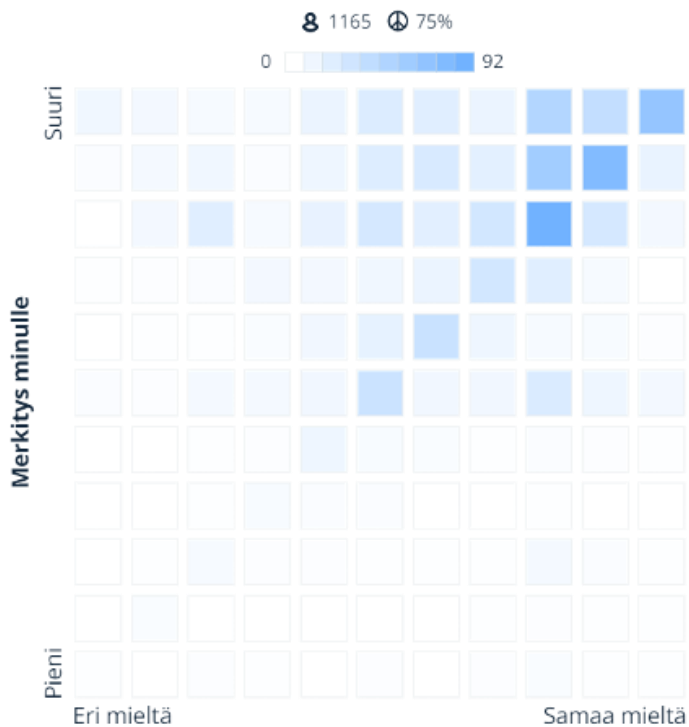


Figure 7. Square field of the answers to the claim "I am satisfied with my opportunities to influence my work".

These last two statements sound similar, but the latter statement has been defined to mean for instance work methods, the pace of work, and work content, while the first statement refers to competence. When figures 6 & 7 are compared, a big difference cannot be seen. It should be noted that in figure 6 the bluest box includes 155 answers, and in figure 7 the bluest box includes 92 answers.

What could be concluded from these differences between figures 6 & 7 is that it is more important to ensure that the employees' competence is at a sufficient level in relation to the goals and tasks. In addition to that, however, it would be good to offer employees better opportunities to influence one's work.

Under the topic *Work tasks and one's resources* the claim *I feel that I am coping well and enjoy my work* gained 3,70 points with a standard deviation of 1,00 and significance of 4,10. It can be stated that also coping and employee enjoyment should be things to focus on since it is mainly perceived as significant, but it did not get so good points.

In addition to these, the claim *I have the opportunity for professional development* gained 3,70 points with a standard deviation of 1,00 and significance of 3,90. It can be stated that this one also did not gain so good points but on the other hand, it is not perceived as significant as the other statements on the topic. So, that is not at the top of the priority list of development needs although its points are relatively low.

The flow of work in the working community

When looking at the results of the topic *The flow of work in the working community*, no question reaches points of four but the significance is over four in all of them. It means that all of the areas in it would require development. Also, in one question the value is the worst when comparing the question-specific points of the subjects *Work tasks and one's own resources*, *The flow of work in the working community*, and *Action of superior*. This question is examined in Figure 8. It represents a square field about the distribution of answers in the statement *We intervene in problems that disturb the work community in sufficient time*. This square field stood out from the rest also for that reason that there the extremes stand out the best.

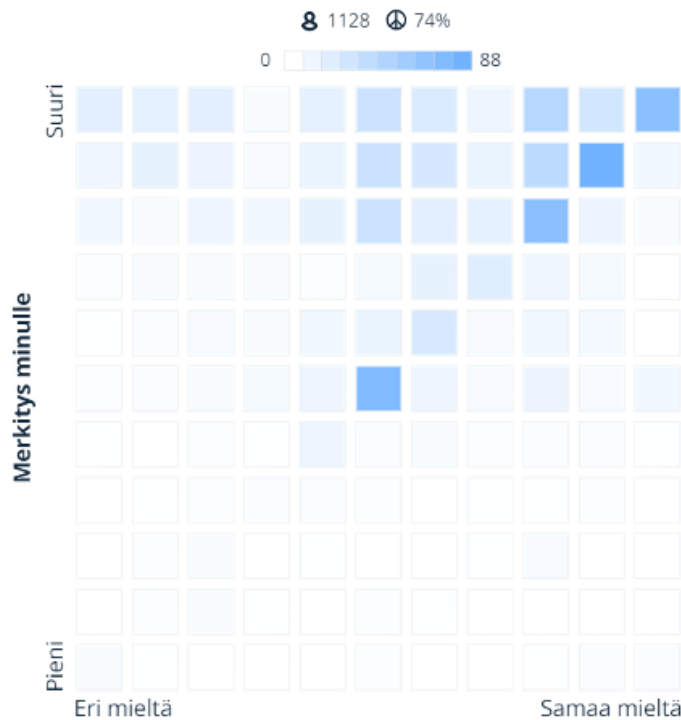


Figure 8. Square field about the distribution of answers in the statement "We intervene in problems that disturb the work community in sufficient time".

In Figure 8, based on the coloring and the maximum number of answers per box (88), it can be stated that the answers are widely distributed. Table 1 shows that points in Figure 8 on average are 3,4, with a standard deviation of 1,00, and an importance of 4,1. If the values of the nine boxes in the upper right corner are added together, the result is 370 answers. It is around 33 % of the total number of answers (1128) to the question. As a counterbalance to this, another extreme can be looked at in the upper left corner. There the importance is perceived to be great, but the matter is not perceived to be realized much or at all. If the values of the nine boxes in the upper left corner are added together, the result is 112 answers. It is around 10 % of the total number of answers (1128) to the question. This is more than any other question. The values in question show that things run very differently in different work communities. However, addressing problems is perceived as significant on average, so it should be developed. In general, it can be said that all the questions with a lot of answers in the upper left corner are issues that should be primarily focused on to improve the overall situation. Therefore, in work communities, intervening in problems in a timely manner is at the top of the priority list of improvement needs.

The other statements, *We have a good spirit together*, *We operate in accordance with agreed goals and operating methods* and *We value each other in the work community*, had very similar values among themselves. The points in all of them were a little under 4 and significance over four which means that all of them would require development since they are regarded as significant.

Action of superior

Next, a statement which values differ from other statements in many ways is looked at (figure 9). The statement is *There is trust between the superior and me and the interaction is open*. Its bluest box has the highest value of answers compared to any other question which is 260. In addition, it has the highest value of points, 4,1, and the highest value of significance 4,3. That is a great combination since it is perceived as significant, and it is also perceived to mostly be realized. If the values of the nine boxes in the upper right corner are added together, the result is 665 answers. It is around 59 % of the total number of answers (1120) to the question. It means that most of the respondents experience that there is trust between one and employee and the interaction is open while they also regard it as significant. Ideally, this should be the situation for all employees.

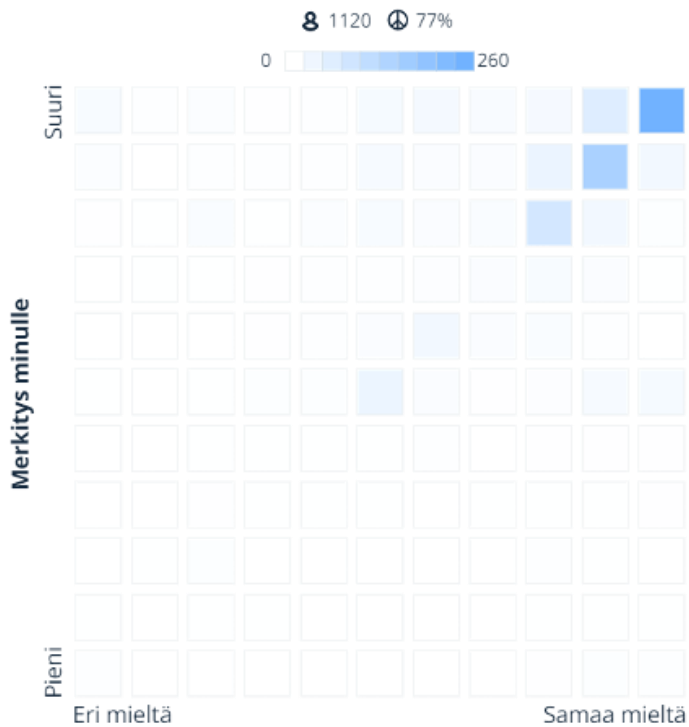


Figure 9. Square field about the distribution of answers in the statement "There is trust between the superior and me and the interaction is open".

At the same time, it is good to note that many responses in the upper right corner naturally increase the averages. However, it does not rule out that the answers have been distributed elsewhere, including in the upper left corner, where the matter is not perceived to be implemented, even though it is perceived to be significant. In this case, it is 14 answers in the box in the upper left corner which indicated the worst case possible. It is a small percentage, but it must be noticed since no employee should be in a situation like that. It means that the management skills of some superiors still need development.

Figure 10 presents a weaker result in the topic *Action of superior* which is *I get enough constructive feedback from my superior*. It got 3,6 points with a standard deviation of 1,0 and a significance of 4,0.

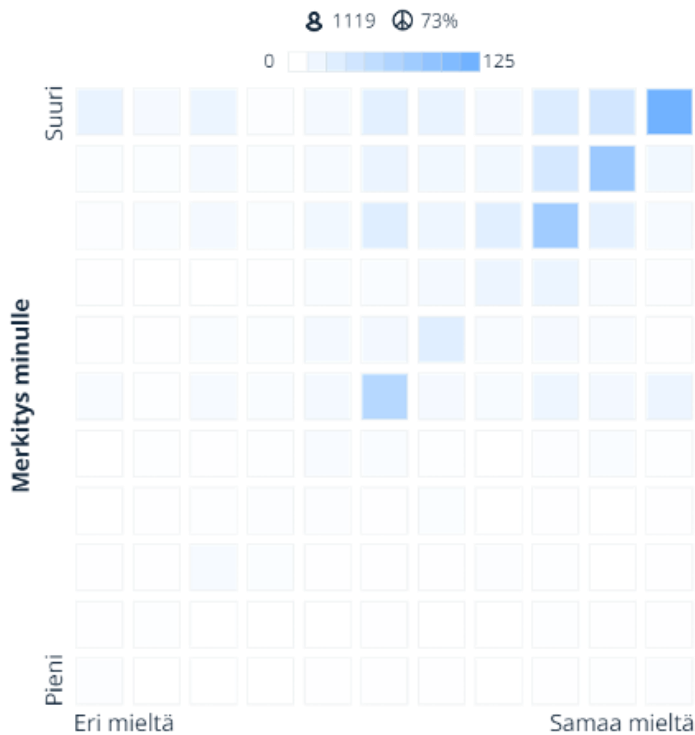


Figure 10. Square field about the distribution of answers in the statement "I get enough constructive feedback from my superior".

Comparing Figure 10 to Figure 9 the values of Figure 10 are more widely distributed. When comparing these, it can also be stated that although the interaction is perceived as open, on the other hand, constructive feedback is perceived as somewhat lacking. So, it would be worth investing in constructive feedback as it is mostly perceived as significant. A positive starting point for that is the already existing open interaction and trust in most cases. It can make it easier to give constructive feedback, which is sometimes perceived as unpleasant or challenging.

In the topic *Action of superior* the statement *My superior encourages the development of operations and accepts development ideas* had points of 3,80, a standard deviation of 1,00, and a significance of 4,00. Comparatively lower points, but high significance, indicate that superiors could encourage better the development of operations and accept more development ideas. This could be better realized, for example, by involving employees more in the organization of work. They are the ones who do the work, so they can often have good suggestions for development through practical experience.

The statement *I know that I can get support from my superior if I need* got points of 4,00, a standard deviation of 1,00, and a significance of 4,20. It can be stated that it should be kept at least on the same level since it is regarded as significant. It is good to note that the standard deviation is high which means that some of the employees do not get enough support from their superior. Such a situation should primarily be fixed as a superior's task and responsibility is to support an employee.

6.2 Qualitative questionnaire

The qualitative questionnaire took a lot of time to go through. The total number of the respondents to the part 2 was 1063 with a response rate of 53%. There were several open questions in which the respondents could choose whether to answer or not. The questions and their number of answers are as follows:

1. Choose three of the personnel rewards and benefits below that you would like the employer to invest the most in to increase work ability and wellbeing (1008) (includes list of options + open answer option for another benefit (41))
2. You can tell other concrete examples of how you and/or your work community's occupational wellbeing could be developed in your daily work by means that do not require an increase in financial and personnel resources (420)
3. Does your work community have any characteristics, such as goals, feedback practices, ability to cooperate, division of tasks, attitudes, work methods, communication, consistency, etc. that prevents occupational wellbeing? Why? (519)
4. How would you like your superior to address the problems that may have been detected in your work community or your ability to work? Is this currently happening? (573)

The purpose of the open-ended questions was to get a very broad picture of how employees perceive their own and their working community's wellbeing. The author created the questions before starting the thesis process as part of her internship, in which case they are not ideal for reliable research. However, the author was prepared for the fact that going through the answers and categorizing them will be challenging.

In total, there were 1553 open answers which the author went through one by one. NVivo was used to organize the data and make it easier to see the most common topics. The topics were parsed based on the questions in the quantitative questionnaire so that comparing the results would be easier. It took several days to go through and organize the answers, as reading them involved a lot of thinking. In addition, for each answer, the author had to think about how to categorize it into. Many answers have been categorized under several different titles, as they have referred to several different topics.

Work tasks and one's own resources

In the topic *Work tasks and one's own resources*, the title with the most answers was *Coping and comfort* with references to 260 answers. These references included mostly issues of having too much workload. One reason affecting this is that the organization's staff has been reduced in recent years, but the work tasks have not decreased. Coping and comfort were also found to be improved in many responses with better wellbeing benefits, such as break exercise or with something as simple as a quiet coffee break during the working day. In the same topic, many references were also in the title *Possibilities to influence* with 110 answers. In many answers, it was stated that the workload was too great and there was no possibility to influence it. In many cases, it was felt that the situation would be easier if more human resources were available. On the other hand, *Competence* and *Professional development* both received only a few references, a total of 19. Thus, they were most likely experienced to already at a satisfactory level in which case there was no need to comment on them.

The flow of work in the working community

In the topic *The flow of work in the work community* the highest number of answers is under the title *Community spirit* with references to 195 answers. Most of them hoped for more joint activities in work communities, which was perceived to be very little. When categorizing the answers, the author wanted to highlight

the positive comments that directly stated that the work community was functioning without problems. Therefore, the title *No problems* have been added under the topic *The flow of work in the work community*. Under the title *No problems* there were references to 104 answers. In practice, it means that around 20% of the respondents who answered the question about the functionality of the working community, experienced that there were no problems in the flow of work in the work community. The rest felt that it worked somehow well or that there were things to improve. However, critical interpretation must be used, because some of those people who feel that there are no problems, may just be blind to them. On the other hand, those who stated that there are no problems, many of them may work in the same work community where there really are no significant problems. In that case, however, it would only represent a small part of the organization.

In the same topic of *The flow of work in the work community*, many answers also refer to the title *Honor* with 130 answers. In most of these, it was stated that others could be respected more. The matter was experienced to be improved even with small things, such as greeting others or thanking someone for a good job or help. The next most responses are in the heading *Interference* with references to 99 answers. These comments largely included the fact that problems disturbing the working community should be intervened earlier. There are also several answers under the heading *Common habits* with references to 91 answers. In these answers, it was most stated that the work community does not have clear common habits, or they are not followed, which causes problems in the flow of work. Of course, this is alarming, especially in the case where a new person is onboarded to the work community and there are no common habits, or they are not followed. It automatically weakens a new employee's chances of adapting to the new work community.

Action of superior

In the topic *Action of superior* the most answers were in the title *Support* with references to 356 answers. These answers mainly contained wishes that the

superior would be more present in everyday life and would intervene in the changes in the individual's ability to work at an earlier stage. The superior's busyness and excessive workload were brought up in many answers. The most worrying situation was for those respondents who said that the superior was so busy that it was not appropriate to disturb him or her.

The author wanted to highlight the positive comments that directly stated that there were no problems in the superior's way of dealing with problems related to work ability. Therefore, the title *No problems* have been added under the topic *Action of superior*. Under the title *No problems* there are references to 174 answers. In practice, it means that around 30% of the respondents who answered the question about action of superior experienced that there were no problems with the superior's way of dealing with problems related to work ability. The rest felt that it worked somehow well or that there were things to improve. It is great that some of the respondents felt that there are no problems. But it is important to note that the majority felt it was lacking. Every employee should feel that they receive support from their superior when needed. It is also good to note that everyone experiences the need for support from a superior in a different way. Because of this, the veracity of the results is more difficult to interpret.

The title *Trust and interaction* contained 89 answers in which many responses highlighted how the respondents wished for more open interaction and trust with their superiors. *Constructive feedback* in turn contained 49 answers where the majority of respondents stated that they do not receive enough constructive feedback. Eventually, the title *Encouraging development* contained only 29 answers. The topic Action of superior itself contained 39 answers. They were such general topics referring to the activities of superiors that it was not favorable to classify them under the aforementioned headings.

In addition to the main topics *Work tasks and one's own resources*, *The flow of work in the work community*, and *Action of superior*, two additional topics were added during the research. As the author was going through the answers, several comments about the need to develop communication began to be received. For

this reason, it was decided to add the topic of *Communication* separately. There was a total of 40 answers referring to it. These answers mostly referred to the lack or obscurity of the organization's internal communication. Another topic is *Organization of work*. When going through the open-ended answers, the author noticed that many respondents referred to shortcomings in the organization of work, so that is why the topic in question was added. There were 227 answers in total referring to it.

What affects the most is the content of the references. After going through all the open answers, the author concluded that the most common topics which appeared in the open question answers were the organization of work, support of the superior of intervening in matters at an early stage, developing open interaction in the work community and wish to have more joint activities in working community and thereby raising community spirit. All of these are things that a superior can affect with one's own behavior.

The first question of the qualitative survey regarding the benefits offered by the employer regarding occupational wellbeing is not an essential part of this research. However, the results showed that the majority of the employees wished for better benefits related to physical health, which was reflected in the popularity of Epassi, a wish for a welfare benefit implemented during working hours, and a wish for an employee benefit bike.

6.3 Comparison between quantitative and qualitative results

When comparing the results of the quantitative and qualitative questionnaires, mutually supporting results can be found in several topics. As stated earlier in the results of the quantitative part, satisfaction with the opportunities to influence one's own work was comparatively low. Also, in the qualitative part, it was widely mentioned that the organization of the work was weak and that one's own workload was too great. These could explain each other. In the quantitative research, it was experienced that superiors do not courage enough the development of operations and accept development ideas. This could also be connected to the feeling of lack of organization of work. If employees had better

chances to develop operations and thus the organization of work, they could copy better. The need for professional development, on the other hand, did not come up very much in either survey.

In the results of the quantitative part, it was found that working communities need development, especially with intervening problems. Interference was a topic that got many answers also in the qualitative part. In addition, community spirit was a topic that was mentioned in many open answers in the qualitative part. These are likely to hinder each other because if there are problems in a working community, the community spirit is unlikely to be good. If problems are not intervened in a timely manner in working communities, it causes friction in them since small problems grow unnecessarily big and may also cause misunderstandings among employees. Problems in the functioning of the working community inevitably affect an individual's wellbeing. Perhaps the desire for joint activities came up so much because of these reasons. The employees hope that the community spirit would be better. It can be stated that with that it would also be easier to stick to common habits, and others would be respected each other's more, which in turn would reduce problems in the working community. Namely, the subjects in question came up the most in the qualitative section when looking at the flow in the working community and were found to need development in the quantitative section as well.

A positive result in the quantitative section was that trust and open interaction between superior and employee was mainly experienced to be good. On the other hand, in the qualitative section, only a small part stated directly that there are no problems with a superior's action. It should be noted that the standard deviation was large in the quantitative section, which explains the fact that some employees do not feel the situation is good enough. In the quantitative survey, constructive feedback was perceived as somewhat lacking. However, in the qualitative survey, the topic received very few answers. That could be explained by the fact that those who felt they received constructive feedback did not comment on the matter in the qualitative survey. On the other hand, those who felt that they did not get enough of it, did not necessarily feel it was so important

that they would have mentioned it. These remaining few, who felt it was important and did not receive it, commented on it in open answers.

RQ1: How is the work ability management perceived at the moment?

RQ2: Which areas of occupational wellbeing need the most development?

RQ3: How could work ability be improved in a concrete way?

RQ1 was clarified at a general level. Quantitative and qualitative research gave somewhat different results to the question. However, it can be stated on a general level that the level of work ability management is perceived to be good by most of the employees, and for the rest, it is realized to some extent or not at all. It must be said that work ability management must be further developed because every employee should feel that they are supported if necessary.

RQ2 was clarified and the areas with the most need for development are organization of work, addressing problems of individuals and working communities earlier, more open interaction, and raising community spirit.

RQ3 was clarified and it answers in more detail to the answers of the RQ2. Work in general should be organized better and employees should have better opportunities to influence one's work. Thereby employees should be more involved in organizing their own work. As they are the ones doing the job, they often have a good knowledge of how things work in practice. This requires a superior to be open to new ideas and ready to develop operations. Addressing the problems of individuals and working communities earlier means in concrete terms, that superiors and colleagues should be more courageous in addressing possible problems of individuals or work communities. This in turn requires and on the other hand develops open interaction. The superior could organize such calm situations so that it would be easier to talk about the issues. It is possible to develop community spirit by addressing potential problems in the work community and going through them together. Once they have been dealt with, it is more comfortable to do things together. On the other hand, if the situation in the work community is really challenging, it might be a better idea to calm down

the situation by doing things together casually at first. With these actions, work ability can be concretely developed.

7 CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The objectives of the thesis were to find out the current state of the occupational wellbeing and working ability of the commissioning party's employees and to produce development proposals on how the working ability management could be improved as part of the TYKKI project. Three research questions were defined to help to reach the goal. Quantitative and qualitative methods were both utilized in the research to achieve the most comprehensive view of the current state. A two-part survey was used which included both a quantitative and a qualitative method. Finally, the research questions were clarified as stated in the results. In this chapter conclusion of the research and development proposals are presented. In addition, research trustworthiness is considered, and future development proposals are presented.

7.1 Conclusion

On a general level, it can be stated that the occupational wellbeing of City of Mikkeli's employees has slightly improved compared to the previous year. However, it is still on such a level that requires development so that the employees would have better occupational wellbeing and work ability. More detailed results are concluded in the following.

When considering an individual's work tasks and one's own resources, competence is perceived to be at a good level on average. At the same time, the opportunity for professional development is perceived to be at a satisfactory level and its importance is perceived to be smaller than in other areas. It can be stated that competence is not the most important development target, but it must be maintained at least at the current level because the meaning is significant. As was mentioned in the theory of an employee's competence, an important part of it is so-called lifelong learning, the importance of which has been particularly emphasized in recent years, because the world's economic situation and

requirements are changing faster and faster (The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d. & Benasso et al. 2022, 2).

On the other hand, the opportunity to influence one's own work is the weakest part with quite high significance. It can be assumed that this also affects coping and comfort, which also has a lower result and is nevertheless of high significance. At the same time, the need to invest in coping and comfort was brought up in open answers. In many of them, this point referred to a better organization of work. It could be improved by giving employees participation in the organization of work. As Keva's research director Laura Pekkarinen (2023) states: "Even if the work is mentally demanding, the mental ability to work can remain good if the opportunities to influence one's own work are perceived as good". As a result, the feeling of control would be better and thus the ability to cope. The employee's opportunity to influence his or her work can also increase motivation, which in turn contributes to wellbeing. This is supported by Kesti's (2014, 86) state which says that added value is created when the basics are kept in order and, in addition, investment is made in the motivation and wellbeing of the staff. After all, the superior is responsible for such operational tasks which include encouraging and motivating employees, noticing strengths, taking care of working conditions, addressing work ability challenges, and taking care of employees' skills (Työkykyjohtamisen käsikirja, 2017, 37).

When considering the flow of work in the working communities, the biggest problem is the lack of intervention in problems, and this is also of great significance. At the same time, the community spirit and honor are perceived to be at a quite good level. However, these are perceived as most significant regarding the flow of work in working community, so, even more, could be invested in them. This is also supported by the fact that even if in the quantitative results the situation seemed to be quite good, there were several wishes for development regarding that in the qualitative results. Investing in the development of open interaction would have a positive effect on the community spirit and honor as well since openness enables trust and honor. As Manka et al.

(2016, 76-77) state, a working community should foster open interaction and work-community skills.

When considering the action of a superior, trust between an employee and a superior appeared to be the most important thing. It gained the highest values, and thus support is generally perceived to be at a good level. However, there was a large standard deviation which means that some employees do not experience the trust to be good. On the other hand, constructive feedback was felt to be lacking, so it can be stated that the interaction between superior and employee requires development. In qualitative results, the superior's role in dealing with problems in working communities also emerged. The superior's task is to lead his or her working community, and that also includes early intervention in challenging issues. As defined by law, an employer has a general duty of care which includes both job characteristics and employees' personal factors that affect work. Therefore, a superior is responsible for ensuring that these are realized in everyday work. (Työturvallisuuslaki 738/2002.) So, from that point of view, too, efforts must be made to intervene with problems early. This is supported by the fact that City of Mikkeli is developing a better operating model of early support. As a conclusion, it can be stated that superiors have a significant role and responsibility to organize and develop the maintenance of work ability of their subordinates and working communities (The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.).

Finally, the importance of work ability management can be justified by the statement by Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2019) which mirrors the future challenges: "An important condition for extending working careers is that people's ability, desire and opportunities to work are improved. The work must be attractive and safe, and it must promote both health and the ability to work and function. A good and healthy work environment promotes the wellbeing of employees. It supports sustainable development, improves the productivity of companies and other organizations, and strengthens the social and economic sustainability of society. Trust and cooperation, as well as employees' high

competence and the full use of their skills in the workplace, are strengths of Finnish working life, on which it is good to build occupational wellbeing.”

7.2 Development proposals

The commissioning party has already started to develop the management skills of superiors by coaching them to better understand their role as a manager of work ability and how to manage difficult situations and conversations. To further improve skills and tools and to supplement coaching, other ways to improve occupational wellbeing and work ability can be done in addition to that. First of all, it would be important to offer post-training encouragement for using new tools and operating models. To support this, more work ability topics could be held on Wednesday infos targeted to superiors. The topics in question could be, for example, those that come up in connection with the training and that are hoped to be dealt with more. Thereby superiors could get more support and advice related to work ability management. One suggestion would be to organize so-called Q&A opportunities for superiors. On the Teams platform of the Wednesday info, a question platform could be utilized, where one could ask questions related to work ability management in advance, the answers to which would be given during the Wednesday info.

Based on the research and observation that occurred during the employment, it is suggested that the skills and tools of superiors are further developed through more active communication and the development of the orientation process. The desired operating methods and discussion culture of the working community must be made clear already in onboarding, and thus the maintenance of good interaction starts at the very beginning. The benefits that support wellbeing should also be clearly communicated already in the orientation. In the same context, it would be important to also talk about the employee's role and responsibilities. A good reminder here is that a superior's own example also has a great effect, because if they downplay the importance of occupational wellbeing, then employees also have a greater threshold to invest in it. (Työkyvyn johtaminen Suomessa vuonna 2022, 2022, 10.) In addition, it should be made clear why the employee is important in the work community and organization in

question. These instructions are already partly defined in the superior's responsibilities, but their practical implementation is partly weak. To help the orientation process to work more efficiently, orientation instructions should be updated and simplified, and superiors should be better encouraged to implement great onboarding to new employees. Even a visual mini-guide for the orientation process could be created for superiors. This development proposal supports the fact that City of Mikkeli has recently started to consider the development of orientation through gamification.

Also, the role of the superior in general and its importance should be even more emphasized. The following development proposal is related to this. Since the role of the superior is reviewed in the training, it could be further deepened after the training. City of Mikkeli could develop a picture, which would be a kind of map or a guide, describing what a good superior is like. The characteristics in question would be based on things that were gone through in the training about what a good superior is like. On the other hand, it would have gathered the core characteristics that City of Mikkeli wants to emphasize. The picture would be a concise summary that would be easier to keep in mind in daily management instead of a long written list. Its content would also be easier to internalize after the training when the topics have already been discussed in more depth together.

When superiors' skills have been developed, their attitude is genuinely caring and they have the courage to intervene even in more difficult matters, superiors can gain self-confidence and new tools for their management work. One should not forget the fact that managers are also individuals. It is also true for them that when their skills and sense of control of work improve their occupational wellbeing improves. Being wellbeing, they spread wellbeing around them. Thereby it is easier for a superior to be present in the everyday life of his or her employees and it is also easier for them to communicate to their subordinates that early support is about caring, offering help, and equal treatment (Työturvallisuuskeskus, 2015, 1:3). That way, it is easier to think about development needs together, and organizing joint activities is more meaningful and motivating.

7.3 Research trustworthiness

Errors should be avoided in the research, so it is therefore important to assess the reliability of the research. The flawlessness of quantitative research can be evaluated with the help of validity and reliability. Validity indicates whether the study measured what was intended to be measured. Reliability refers to the accuracy of the measurements, which can be measured so that another researcher would be able to obtain similar results with the same study. (Vilkka, 2021.) On the other hand, Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2009) state that there is no one right way to assess the reliability of qualitative research, so there are different perceptions of its assessment.

To ensure trustworthiness, data security and research ethics were considered in the collection and processing of data as mentioned in chapter 5. The limitations of the research were defined well, and the client's wishes were carefully considered. Research questions were defined precisely to achieve the desired objectives. Finally, the research questions were answered, and the objectives were achieved. However, the questions of the surveys could have been even better defined to achieve a more reliable results.

It is good to note that the research questions were defined after the questionnaire was created. It is because the questionnaires were aimed to implement in the commissioning party anyway, so the process was started before the author started the actual thesis process. For that reason, the research questions and questionnaire questions do not work together in the best possible way. Figuring out the answers to the research questions has therefore been more challenging when the questions in the surveys have not been set based on the research questions. In retrospect, the author concluded that the questions in the surveys could have been thought through more carefully so that the research results would have been clearer and more trustworthy.

As mentioned before, the questions are partly slightly different compared to the previous year. Efforts have been made to keep comparability the same, but to

clarify the questions more precisely. Despite everything, it means that the results are not completely comparable. However, it is worth knowing that even if the questions would be exactly the same, the respondent may interpret them differently than when answering the previous time. For instance, the respondent's mood, level of energy, surrounding, and life situation always affect the results. Also, many times there are some changes in the staff which affects the results as well. So, it can be stated that there is never a full possibility to compare the results to previous results.

As discussed with the commissioning party the weaker possibility to compare the results to the previous years' results was not experienced to be a problem. The main idea of the surveys is still to know what the situation is now, what is good, and what needs development. The open-ended questions allowed the staff to talk openly about their own experiences. In addition to this, the commissioning party emphasizes encouraging superiors and work communities to discuss the results. Because the main point is not the numbers but what is the reason behind them.

What is good about the research, and which improves the trustworthiness of the research is the very extensive research material due to the high number of respondents. As mentioned earlier, 66% of the employees answered the quantitative part, and 53% to the qualitative part of the survey. Thereby, most of the staff answered both parts of the survey. When looking at the square fields, each question covered included almost the same number of respondents, so they were comparable to each other.

However, the reliability of the results is also affected by the fact that, although the number of respondents was really large, a large part of the personnel also did not answer. One explanatory factor for the loss is what was also mentioned in a few open answers, that some employees no longer feel like answering surveys because they feel that nothing will ever change anyway. Some employees, on the other hand, may look at their work e-mail or internal intra very rarely in which case the survey may have been completely missed.

It has been possible for the author to work in the commissioning party's organization while doing the research, so it has given a better opportunity to look at the overall situation compared to if the research had been done from outside of the organization. In this way, the author has been able to make her own observations throughout the research and has been able to talk with different parties which in turn has opened new perspectives. These parties are for instance chief stewards, occupational safety representatives, the HR department, and the HR director of the commissioning party. Some things have already started to be improved in the organization based on the results of the survey conducted by the author.

Future research proposals

If the Q&A function of the Wednesday info that I suggested is implemented, after using it for a while, it would be good to ask the superiors if they find it useful. Secondly, if the picture I proposed about the role of a superior is implemented, after using it for some time, it could be studied how well superiors have internalized the content of the picture and whether it has guided them in their everyday work.

After the training of the superiors related to TYKKI project, the commissioning party could do research for superiors on how they have experienced the significance of the training. Did it gain them new practical tools or thought patterns, confidence, or did they find a sparring partner through it, for example. In addition, the view of both employees and superiors could be studied on how they perceive the functionality and practicality of the new electronic workability management tool. And of course, the wellbeing survey should continue to be carried out regularly so that employees' occupational wellbeing can be measured at a certain level.

8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Finally, it can be stated that the author found the topic of the thesis very interesting. It was even a positive problem because the topic is so broad and

multidimensional. Thereby it slowed down the process of writing the theory because choices had to be made all the time about which issues to cover and which to leave out. Work ability and occupational wellbeing as a concept also produced challenges because they encompass slightly different things according to different definitions. Due to these reasons, the challenge was also to limit the topic to be simple enough and to analyze the most relevant information from the extensive research material.

The thesis was completed a little later than the original plan was. The progress of the thesis was slightly slowed down by the fact that the author worked full-time in the commissioning party's organization throughout the process. On the other hand, only after starting the process of the research, the author understood how much material she is dealing with and how much work there is in analyzing the material. This was because the author only realized when the author was already underway that more time should have been spent on planning and defining the research. It would have been easier to fix the mistakes in the planning phase. Thereby the author learned that next time when doing research, one must invest even more in the planning phase than in the implementation itself. It makes the implementation of the research significantly easier.

Overall, the process was instructive and interesting, and the author found out that there is still a lot to study and learn about the subject. The author feels that doing the thesis is beneficial for the client, as it helps to provide good information about the current development targets and to open a discussion about how to start working on the development targets in question. Hopefully, also other municipal organizations will be able to take inspiration for their own activities through Mikkeli's example of developing work ability management, which this study was also a part of.

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QUANTITATIVE SURVEY QUESTIONS

Multiple choice questions on a scale of 1-5, part 1 of the survey:

Työtehtävät ja omat voimavarat

1. Koen jaksavani hyvin ja viihdyn työssäni
2. Olen tyytyväinen mahdollisuuksiini vaikuttaa työhöni (esim. työmenetelmät, työtahti, työn sisältö)
3. Tunnen hallitsevani työni ja osaamiseni on riittävällä tasolla tavoitteisiin ja tehtäviin nähden
4. Minulla on mahdollisuus ammatilliseen kehittymiseen

Työn sujuminen työyhteisössä

1. Meillä on hyvä yhteishenki
2. Toimimme sovittujen tavoitteiden ja toimintatapojen mukaisesti
3. Arvostamme toisiamme (tunnen, että minua arvostetaan, arvostan muita)
4. Puutumme työyhteisömme toimivuutta häiritseviin tekijöihin (esim. vuorovaikutusongelmiin) riittävän ajoissa

Esihenkilön toiminta

1. Esihenkilöni kannustaa kehittämään toimintaa ja ottaa kehitysideoita vastaan
2. Esihenkilön ja minun välillä vallitsee luottamus ja vuorovaikutus on avointa
3. Saan esihenkilöltäni riittävästi rakentavaa palautetta
4. Tiedän tarvittaessa saavani tukea esihenkilöltäni (esim. henkilökohtaisen elämän ja työelämän yhdistäminen, terveys, muutostilanne, epäonnistuminen, haastava asiakastilanne)

Työnantajan toiminta

1. Mielikuvani Mikkelin kaupungista työnantajana on positiivinen
2. Käytössä olevat sähköiset sovellukset, tietotekniset ratkaisut ja ohjeet helpottavat työntekoa ja yhtenäistävät toimintaa
3. Mikkelin kaupungin strategia ja arvot ohjaavat työnantajan toimintaa myös suhteessa henkilöstöön (arvot & strategia lueteltu kyselyssä)
4. Työnantaja kannustaa henkilöstöä kehittämään toimintaa

QUALITATIVE SURVEY QUESTIONS

Open questions, part 2 of the survey:

1. Valitse alla olevista henkilöstön palkitsemisista ja eduista kolme, joihin toivoisit työnantajan panostavan eniten työkyvyn ja -hyvinvoinnin lisäämiseksi (luettelo vaihtoehtoista + avoin vastausmahdollisuus jollekin muulle edulle)
2. Voit kertoa muita konkreettisia esimerkkejä siitä, kuinka sinun ja/tai työyhteisösi työhyvinvointia voisi päivittäisessä tekemisessä kehittää keinoilla, jotka eivät edellytä taloudellisten ja henkilöstöresurssien lisäämistä
3. Onko työyhteisössäsi jokin ominaisuus, kuten tavoitteet, palautekäytännöt, yhteistyökyvykkyys, työtehtävien jako, asenteet, työmenetelmät, keskusteluyhteys, johdonmukaisuus, ymv. joka estää työhyvinvointia? Miksi?
4. Kuinka toivoisit esihenkilösi puuttuvan työyhteisössäsi tai työkyvyssäsi mahdollisesti havaittuihin ongelmiin? Toteutuuko tämä tällä hetkellä?

Vastata voit tietokoneella, tabletilla tai älykännykällä. Vastaaminen onnistuu myös omalla henkilökohtaisella älypuhelimella ja sähköpostin ja linkit voi välittää tarvittaessa eteenpäin.

Vastaathan molempiin osiin viimeistään 16.10.2022.

Kiitos osallistumisestasi!

Henkilöstöpalvelut

SURVEY COVERING NOTES

Quantitative survey:

TERVETULOA VASTAAMAAN PULSSI -TYÖHYVINVOINTIKYSELYYN

Kysymyksien sanoitusta on hieman muokattu, mutta vertailtavuus edellisten kyselyiden tuloksiin on pyritty säilyttämään. Kyselyn aihealueet; omat voimavarat, työyhteisön toimivuus, esihenkilötyö ja työnantajan toiminta ovat ennallaan. Myös QWL-indeksi lasketaan aiempaan tapaan koko organisaation vastauksista.

Jokaisen kysymyksen kohdalla arvioit asteikolla 1 - 5 oletko väittämän kanssa samaa vai eri mieltä. Samassa nelikentässä arvioit myös sitä, kuinka merkitykselliseksi asian toteutumisen koet. Tarkoituksena on saada totuudenmukainen kuva koetusta työhyvinvoinnista. Jokaisen kokemus on subjektiivinen, joten väärää vastauksia ei ole. Kyselyn tarkoituksena on tunnistaa vahvuudet ja kehittämiskohteet yksikkö-, tulosalue- ja palvelualueetasoilla. Hyödynnämme tuloksia myös Kevan työelämänkehittämisrahan mahdollistaman hankkeen pohjana Mikkelin kaupungilla.

Koonnit kyselyn tuloksista valmistuvat loka- marraskuun vaihteessa ja raportit toimitetaan esihenkilöille. Mikäli vastauksia yksikössä on alle 5, siirtyvät vastaukset organisaation seuraavalle tasolle ja antavat näin arvokasta tietoa tulos- ja palvelualue tasolle. Jokainen vastaus on tärkeä. Tähän kyselyyn vastataan nimettömästi.

Esihenkilötyötä arvioidessasi arvioi lähiesihenkilösi (mm. hyväksyy lomasi) työskentelyä ja arvioissa Mikkelin kaupungista työnantajana keskity operatiivisen johdon (ei valtuusto/hallitus) työskentelyyn ja päätöksentekoon.

Qualitative survey:

TERVETULOA VASTAAMAAN KYSELYYN TYÖKYKYJOHTAMISEN JA TYÖHYVINVOINNIN KEHITTÄMISEKSI

Kyselyn tässä osassa kerrot näkemyksesi siitä, mihin työnantajan kannattaisi kohdentaa resursseja ja löytää keinoja mm. henkilöstön palkitsemisen, muistamisen, etuuksien osalta sekä yleensä työhyvinvoinnin lisäämiseksi.

Kyselyn tässä osassa kerätään vastaukset vain palvelualueetasoisesti. Myös tähän kyselyn osaan voit vastata nimettömästi, mutta mikäli haluat osallistua arvontaan, jossa vastaajien kesken arvotaan 3 x 100 euron lisäys ePassi-saldoon, liitä tähän kyselyn osioon yhteystietosi (nimi, s-posti, puh.numero). Yhteystietoja käyteen ainostaan arvonnassa voittaneiden henkilöiden tavoittamiseksi.

Kyselyn vastauksia hyödynnetään yhteenvetona anonymisti Kaakkois-Suomen Ammattikorkeakoulun opinnäytetyön tutkimuksessa.

REMINDING EMAILS

Reminder email 1:

Hei,

Työhyvinvointikyselyyn on kertynyt jo hyvin vastauksia, mutta mikäli **sinun** vastauksesi vielä puuttuu, käythän kertomassa näkemyksesi viimeistään 16.10.2022

Vastaamaan pääset näistä linkeistä:

[Työhyvinvointikyselyn osa 1](#)

[Työhyvinvointikyselyn osa 2](#)

Linkit löytyvät myös Helmi-intrasta.

Henkilöstöpalvelut

Reminder email 2:

Hei,

Pulssi-työhyvinvointikysely on auki vielä muutaman päivän ajan. **Viimeinen vastauspäivä on 16.10.** Mikäli et ole vielä osallistunut, niin käytähän pienen hetken ja vastaat kyselyyn näistä linkeistä:

[Työhyvinvointikyselyn osa 1](#)

[Työhyvinvointikyselyn osa 2](#)

Samalla voit osallistua arvontaan ja voittaa 100 € lisää ePassi-rahaa.

Henkilöstöpalvelut