

LUT School of Business and Management

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International Business

The Expectations of Finnish Business Master's Students Towards Workplace Wellbeing Programs

**Suomalaisten kaupallisen alan maisteriopiskelijoiden odotukset
työhyvinvointiohjelmia kohtaan**

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ABSTRACT

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The objective of this Bachelor's thesis is to find out what graduating business students in Finland think and expect of workplace wellbeing programs and workplace wellbeing in general. The goal is also to provide tools and ideas for companies, so that they can plan their future workplace wellbeing programs to align better with the needs and expectations of the younger workforce.

The study was conducted using qualitative research methods. The empirical material of the study was collected by semi-structural interviews. The sample consisted of eleven Finnish Master's students who study in four different business schools. Moreover, two Finnish companies were interviewed in order to get insights to what kind of workplace wellbeing programs companies in real life offer for their employees.

Based on the results of the research, the graduating business students put high value on their wellbeing, and understand that not feeling well at work has a major impact on their wellbeing also outside of work. Important factors of their workplace wellbeing seemed to be flexibility, feedback, and the work atmosphere in general. From workplace wellbeing programs the graduating business students expected fun and different activities, like climbing and paintball, in a social setting. They also wanted companies to address more ergonomics and physical activity, especially in jobs where the employees remain sitting down during most of the working day. The current workplace wellbeing programs in the two examined companies partially meet the needs and expectations of the Master's students. However, there is clearly room for improvements, changes, and new innovative programs.

TIIVISTELMÄ

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Tämän kandidaatintutkielman tavoitteena on selvittää kaupallisen alan maisteriopiskelijoiden tarpeita ja odotuksia koskien työhyvinvointia ja työhyvinvointiohjelmia. Samalla tavoitteena on antaa yrityksille ideoita, joita ne voisivat hyödyntää tulevaisuuden työhyvinvointiohjelmia suunnitellessaan.

Tutkielma on tehty käyttäen kvalitatiivista eli laadullista tutkimusmenetelmää. Tutkimuksen empiirinen aineisto kerättiin puolistrukturoidulla haastatteluilla. Otanta koostui yhdestätoista suomalaisesta maisteriopiskelijasta, jotka opiskelevat neljässä eri yliopistossa. Lisäksi työtä varten haastateltiin kahta suomalaista yritystä käytännön esimerkkien saamiseksi yritysten tarjoamista työhyvinvointiohjelmista.

Tutkimustulosten perusteella voidaan sanoa, että vastavalmistuvat kauppatieteilijät arvostavat hyvinvointiaan. He ymmärtävät, että työhyvinvointi on merkittävä osa heidän kokonaishyvinvointiaan – työssä viihtymättömyys näkyy aina myös töiden ulkopuolella. Työhyvinvoinnin tärkeimpiä tekijöitä haastateltaville olivat joustavuus, työilmapiiri sekä esimiehiltä saatu palaute. Työhyvinvointiohjelmilta maisteriopiskelijat odottivat pääasiassa erilaisia aktiviteetteja ja hauskanpitoa (esim. kiipeily ja värikuulasota) työtovereidensa kanssa. Haastateltavat toivoivat myös parempaa ergonomiaa ja enemmän fyysisiä aktiviteetteja erityisesti työpaikoissa, joissa työntekijät istuvat suurimman osan päivästä. Kahden esimerkkirytyksen tarjoamat työhyvinvointiohjelmat vastasivat osittain maisteriopiskelijoiden tarpeita ja odotuksia, mutta työhyvinvointiohjelmien kehittämiseksi ja uudistamiseksi on kuitenkin selkeä tarve.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY	2
1.2. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	2
1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	3
1.4. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS	4
1.5. KEY CONCEPTS	6
2. WORKPLACE WELLBEING PROGRAMS	8
2.1. THE EVOLUTION OF WORKPLACE WELLBEING PROGRAMS	8
2.2. THE CURRENT STATE OF WORKPLACE WELLBEING PROGRAMS	10
3. MILLENNIALS	12
3.1. MILLENNIALS AS WORKERS	12
3.2. MILLENNIALS' CHARACTERISTICS	15
4. WORKPLACE WELLBEING IN THE EXAMPLE COMPANIES	17
4.1. COMPANY X	17
4.2. PIPELIFE FINLAND	18
5. RESULTS	20
5.1. MILLENNIALS AND WELLBEING	20
5.2. INTERVIEWEES' BELIEFS AND EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS WORKPLACE WELLBEING PROGRAMS	21
6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION	25
REFERENCES:	29
APPENDIXES	33

1. INTRODUCTION

A healthy employee is less absent from work, has fewer sick days, works longer days, and retires at a later age (Hämäläinen, 2009). With so much being written about workplace wellbeing these days every company should know the importance of it. However, many companies are still trapped in a conundrum of maximizing profits while employee wellbeing is being pushed down on the priority list. In Finland, wellbeing is a part of the measured strategy in only 9% of all companies, and only about one third of all have some sort of goal regarding wellbeing of their employees (Aura, Ahonen, Hussi & Ilmarinen, 2016).

The subject of this Bachelor's thesis is workplace wellbeing and workplace wellbeing programs from millennials' point of view. Two Finnish companies and their workplace wellbeing program offerings were chosen for this study as examples. The study was made for a Finnish wellbeing consulting company, WeBridge Oy, which connects its client companies with the most effective workplace wellbeing program suppliers to bridge possible gaps between employers, employees and company coaches. This is achieved based on analyzed client needs and preferences, and the audited strengths of wellbeing suppliers, resulting in savings in wellbeing expenditure with enhanced results. The one program fits all –model is something WeBridge does not believe in, and that's why the company was started in 2016. (WeBridge, 2017)

The subject of the study is current and interesting because the importance of wellbeing is only going to get bigger as the large generations are slowly retiring from the workforce. The result of all lost talent is creating a crisis many didn't even know about, the crisis in human capital. It may not sound that serious but between 2020 and 2030 the projected shortfall of human capital and talent will result in worldwide imbalance, creating severe challenges for companies and even whole economies. (Strack, Baier, Marchingo & Sharda, 2014)

One of the big challenges for companies will be to keep their top talent in-house. Recruiting and keeping the new young talent could have a major impact on business success in the near future. (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, Lance, 2010) According to Hester (2013) the cost of a leaving worker can be up to 250% of his or her yearly salary.

Not only must a company replace the worker but there are additional hidden costs related with recruitment, training, morale damage, and productivity loss (O'Connell & Kung, 2007).

To make the situation even harder, after 2020 a significant amount of the workforce is going to be represented by a generation called the millennials. The millennials are willing to change employer more often and are known to have lower engagement levels to their respected companies compared to the older generations (Caraher, 2015). One viable way to increase the engagement of this diverse group of people is to offer innovative workplace wellbeing programs that cater their needs and support their preferences (Kumar, 2015).

1.1. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This research is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of this study, the objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, limitations, methodology, and key concepts in this research.

Chapters two and three are the theory chapters. The first theory chapter is about workplace wellbeing programs. The chapter describes the evolution of the workplace wellbeing programs as well as the present state of them. Second of the theory chapters' focuses on millennials. The aim is to understand how this diverse generation acts in the workplace, and what kind of characteristics they generally have.

The empirical part starts in chapter four where the examined companies and their offered workplace wellbeing programs are briefly introduced. Chapter five is used to portray the findings of the held interviews. The aim of the sixth chapter is to make connections from the gathered material and the previous literature in the form of conclusions. The discussion is also included in this last part.

1.2. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of the study is to find information about needs and expectations of graduating business students regarding workplace wellbeing programs. From the previous literature and held interviews, the goal is to get ideas how the chosen companies could develop their workplace wellbeing programs to fit better the younger generation. Another goal is to provide tools for other companies so that they could better plan their workplace wellbeing

programs in the future. Moreover, the aim is to gather data so that WeBridge Oy can benefit from it for example in the form of improving their service package.

In this thesis there is one main research question and three sub-questions. These questions combined with the theoretical framework will form the structure for this study.

The main research question is:

“How should companies develop or change their workplace wellbeing programs so that they would better meet the needs and expectations of graduating business students?”

In order to find the answer to the main research question the sub-questions need to be answered. The sub-research-questions are:

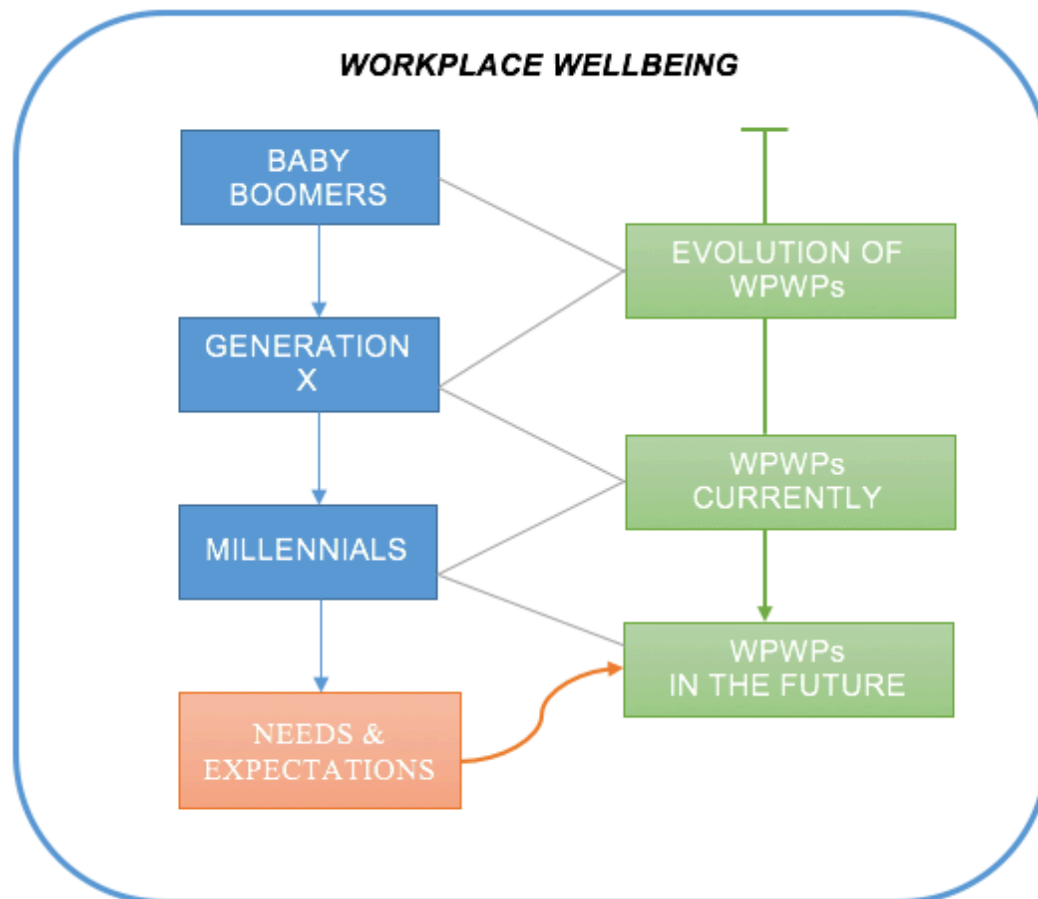
“How have the workplace wellbeing programs developed during the years? What kind of programs do companies offer currently?”

“What kind of employees are the millennials and how should these factors be taken into account when developing workplace wellbeing programs?”

“What kind of factors do millennials value in workplace wellbeing and -programs?”

1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the theoretical framework is to establish a sense of structure for the research. It can be thought as a guide where the research problem is shown as accurately as possible in a conceptual frame. (Statistics Solutions, 2017) The theoretical framework for this research combines the evolution and current state of workplace wellbeing programs with the generations. The aim is to find characteristics that have influenced the workplace wellbeing programs and how the needs and expectations of millennials should be taken into account when companies plan their workplace wellbeing programs in the future.



Picture 1: The Theoretical Framework

WPWP = Workplace wellbeing program

1.4. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This study will be made as a qualitative case study. Qualitative research methods primarily seek answers to questions why, what, or how. The method is characterized by its intentions, which relate to understanding some aspect of a social phenomenon. (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015) In addition, the method's features include focusing on a smaller sample size and then analyzing it as accurately as possible. The method normally produces words instead of numbers as data. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 2009) As a methodology, case studies were generally neglected, or even ignored for a long time, even if William Beveridge stated as early as 1951 that "More discoveries have arisen from intense observation of individual cases than from statistics applied to large groups". The never ending method war between case studies and statistical methods is still in favor of the latter, but recently the conversation has shifted from battling which of the methods is better to understanding that they rather complement each other. The key strength of case studies

is depth – getting detailed and rich data about the examined phenomenon. The method is also very useful for developing new hypotheses and research questions. (Flyvbjerg, 2011)

The material of this study was collected by semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interviews the interviewee knows the topic of the study but they don't know the exact questions. The interviews are very much like conversations which gives the interviewee a chance to give open and natural answers. (Miles & Gilbert, 2005)

To get participants for the interviews, a total of fifteen invitations were sent to randomly selected Master's students out of the social media contacts of the examiner. Eleven out of the fifteen students (73%) accepted the invitation, and formed the used sample of this research. The sample consisted of five women and six men who were born between 1990 and 1993. The interviewees were from all over Finland and represented a total of four different universities including LUT (Lappeenranta University of Technology) School of Business and Management, Aalto University School of Business (Helsinki), University of Vaasa, and Copenhagen Business School. The interviewees had previously worked in big companies like Nordea, Fiskars, Tieto, and Elisa. Moreover, a few of the student even had some international working experience from companies like Zalando, Adidas, and T-Mobile. The majority of the interviews were held face to face in a private setting. Three of the interviews had to be held as Skype-interviews due to geographical restrictions.

The research is limited to address the needs and expectations of graduating business students regarding workplace wellbeing programs in Finland. The majority of the business students who are about to graduate in the near future represent the core of the millennial generation. The age-range for this generation differs a little bit in the academic literature but commonly the millennials are said to be born between 1980 and 2000 (LaCore, 2015). For the interview part the generation was narrowed down from both ends so that it would better fit the age-range of current business Master's students. The study is also limited to the examined companies and their workplace wellbeing programs. The workplace wellbeing programs represented what the companies had offered during the last year and what they were going to offer in the near future.

1.5. KEY CONCEPTS

Workplace wellbeing

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined health already in 1948 as “A state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. The definition of workplace wellbeing or worksite wellness does have very similar features as the one WHO released almost 70 years ago. Workplace wellbeing is not only the lack of workplace nausea, such as workplace bullying or work-related stress. Workplace wellbeing is a holistic phenomenon that is comprised of many factors that tie strongly together. It consists of physical, psychological, social, and mental health. If one of the factors is lacking, it easily affects the other factors. For example, if the job is psychologically demanding it can easily have an effect on the physical health in the form of illness. (Virolainen, 2012)

Too often companies still understand workplace wellness as only increasing the physical condition of its employees or offering recreational days every now and then. Nowadays the focus should be more on the community instead of an individual, and on the health and prevention instead of the sickness. (Manka, Heikkilä-Tammi & Vauhkonen, 2012) Workplace wellbeing is also affected by many factors. Organizations’ characteristics, leadership style, atmosphere, and the job itself are all factors that have an effect on workplace wellbeing. Moreover, customer relationships, employees own personality and situation home also have an impact on the experienced wellness. In an individual, workplace wellbeing is seen as joy at work while from a company point of view it can be seen more like an asset for an entire work community. (Manka et al., 2012)

Workplace wellbeing programs

Workplace wellbeing programs are organized, employer-sponsored services that are intended to help employees, and sometimes even their families, in increasing or maintaining their quality of life, reducing health risks, or improving performance at work. The bottom line is that the employer itself can also benefit from these programs by for example enhancing its performance or saving on employee health-related costs. (Berry, Mirabito & Baum, 2010; Call, Gerdes & Robinson, 2009)

The Generations

Today's workforce almost entirely consists of people from three generations: The Baby Boomers, The Generation X, and the millennials. Traditionally, trends and characteristics linked with individuals born around the same time in history have been stated as the foundation for the generational identification. The generations are influenced by factors such as parents, notable social and economic events, popular culture, and media that build common value systems and give each cohort its own characteristics. These factors have the biggest impact during an individual's childhood and adolescence. (Whitehouse & Steele Flippin, 2017; Twenge et al., 2010).

Millennials

The age-range and name approach of this fascinating generation is challenging, as the actual birth years and names for the generation have many variations in the academic literature. Commonly the generation consists of individuals born approximately between 1980 and 2000. (LaCore, 2015) Generation Y, Generation Next, Generation Me are all different names for this cohort but in the literature they prefer the term millennials. The generational experts William Strauss and Neil Howe (2000) are credited for coining the term in 1987. Notable events in the early lives of millennials were globalism, the Internet age, and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center twin towers that shook the whole world (DeVaney, 2015). Generally speaking, millennials are children of Generation X. (Alsop, 2008).

Generation X

The label for group of individuals born between approximately 1965 and 1980. Commonly the parents of the millennials and children of Baby Boomers. (Whitehouse & Steele Flippin, 2017; LaCore, 2015)

Baby Boomers

The Baby Boomers refer to the group of people born between the end of the World War 2 and around 1964. Generally, parents of the Generation X. (Whitehouse & Steele Flippin, 2017; LaCore, 2015)

2. WORKPLACE WELLBEING PROGRAMS

Workplace wellbeing programs have come a long way to the state where they currently rank in the corporate world. For many years the programs were seen as nice add-ons for the companies. However, nowadays workplace wellbeing programs can even be parts of company strategies and an asset when recruiting new employees. Data have shown that the return of interest (ROI) of well-designed wellbeing programs can be as high as 6 to 1. Even if the ROI ratio rarely hits those numbers, the fact is that healthier employees cost less money. (Berry, Mirabito & Baum, 2010)

2.1. THE EVOLUTION OF WORKPLACE WELLBEING PROGRAMS

The evolution of workplace wellbeing programs began with Bernardino Ramazzini (1633-1713), an Italian physician, who was interested in preventing work-related diseases and helping workers in improving their wellbeing during the 17th century. Ramazzini is considered to be among the first to write about the workers' vulnerability to these diseases. However, about 50 years after Ramazzini's death, the Industrial Revolution changed the way work was done and as a side product also came new injuries and health problems which meant that Ramazzini's ideals didn't really have time to spread. (Gainer, 2008)

In 1810, Robert Marcus Owen, a Welsh social reformer, wanted to protect the wellbeing of the workforce and suggested a 10-hour work day. Seven years after this Owen took his idea even further and proposed that work days should consist of eight hours of labor, eight hours of pastime, and eight hours of sleep. (Donnachie, 2000) Nevertheless, it was as late as 1914 when bigger organizations started using the ideal on a wider scale. Ford Motor Company is believed to be one of the first to implement the eight-hour workday into practice. Henry Ford, the head of the company, wanted to keep the assembly line running continuously and implemented three eight-hour shifts to his factory in Detroit, Michigan. (Chalmers, 2013)

Even with these noteworthy milestones, wellbeing didn't get much footing in the corporate world until the 1950s. During that time many companies started offering their employees the first form of modern day workplace wellbeing programs, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). In the beginning, the EAPs were mainly interventions that focused on

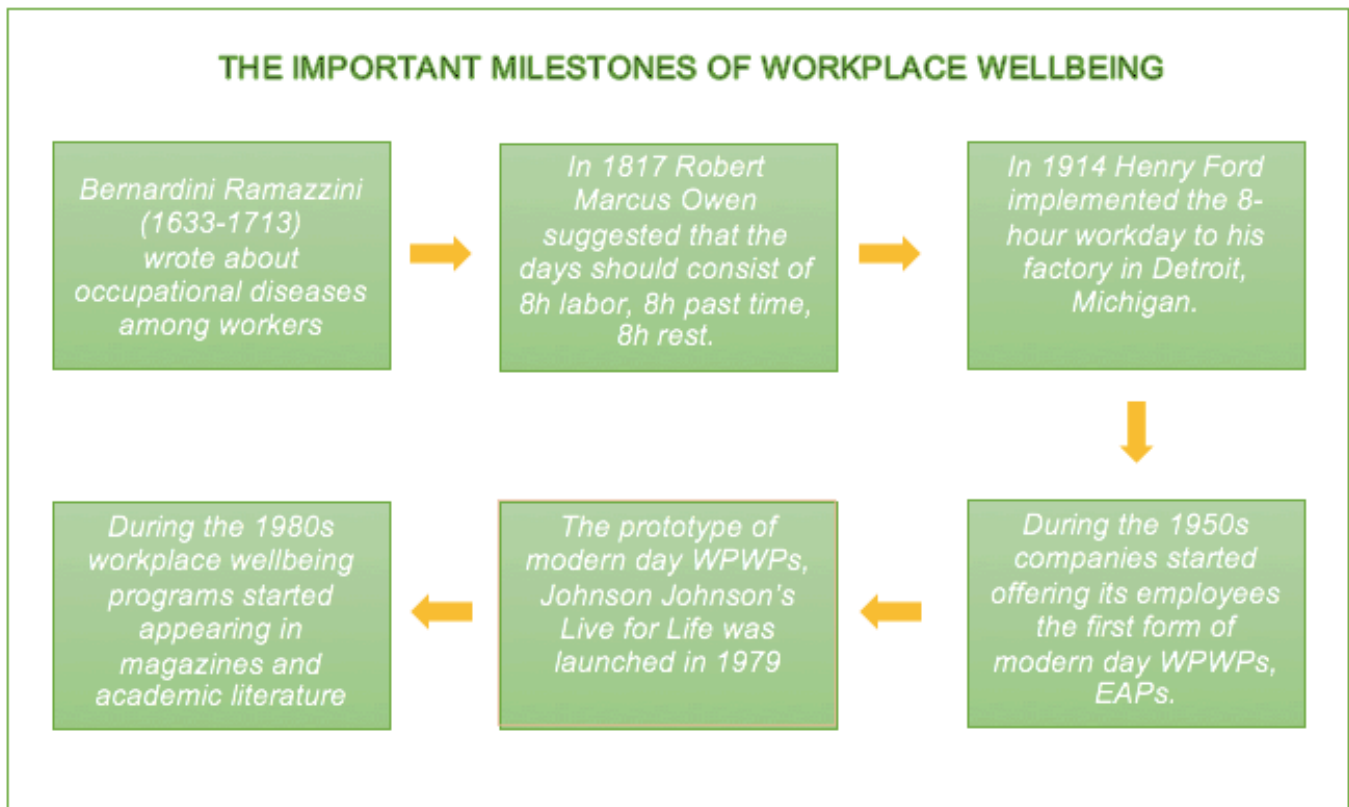
employee alcoholism and other substance abuse. (Owens, 2006) Still, it was as late as 1970s when true workplace wellbeing programs started existing in the corporate world. Cultural shifts that endorsed wellness and research findings about the cost of unhealthy employees were among the factors that emerged workplace wellbeing during this time. Still, it was known, that participation in these fitness programs purged from personal motivation, not from the increased health education. (Reardon, 1998; Greiner, 1987)

A prototype of modern day workplace wellbeing programs is believed to be Johnson Johnson's program called *Live for Life* that was launched in 1979. The program started with a questionnaire with questions regarding physical assessment and other health behaviors. After seeing the results Johnson & Johnson offered help to its employees in areas such as stress management, nutrition, and weight control in the form of educational classes, self-study material, and personal support. (Pencak, 1991)

During the 1980s workplace wellbeing programs started appearing in academic literature and health magazines which also boosted the wellbeing phenomenon. The articles featured information on how workplace wellbeing programs could save companies costs related to illness, as well as reduce the amount of employee sick days. Moreover, the articles discussed how the brand new fitness centers many companies built, could potentially draw interest from new talent. (Call, Gerdes & Robinson, 2009) As a result of the many new fitness centers, workplace wellbeing programs mainly focused on the physical side of health during the beginning of 1980s. Later during that decade, companies also started addressing the psychological dimension of health. However, the focus was mainly restricted on the work-related health issues, such as stress and depression. (Reardon, 1998)

In the 1990s the proof for the positive impact of workplace wellbeing programs started to be inevitable which lead to corporate managers supporting these programs more widely. During this decade wellness was divided into three categories. First of the categories addressed awareness. Programs that fell into this category were educational classes, health fairs, and posters. These programs were only one-time things and didn't contain any follow-ups. Second of the program categories addressed behavioral change and lifestyle. The programs usually had an educational part as well as intervention weeks up to twelve weeks. The third category targeted organizational culture and environment. These programs rarely had a time-frame and aimed to make wellbeing a part of company culture

and strategy by increasing knowledge and making changes in the company structures. (Pencak, 1991) Moreover, screening programs were later added on to the list as another category (Hughes, Patrick, Hannon, Harris, & Ghosh, 2011).



Picture 2: The important milestones of workplace wellbeing

WPWP = Workplace wellbeing program, EAP = Employee assistance program

2.2. THE CURRENT STATE OF WORKPLACE WELLBEING PROGRAMS

The still growing evidence on the effectiveness of workplace wellbeing programs for both occupational diseases and personal factors have made them seemingly take off during the 20th century. The offered programs have developed from delivering gym access and health information to companies addressing all aspects of health through a wide variety of programs. Among factors affecting current workplace wellbeing include globalization, changing working conditions, increased competition, and changes in family patterns. In addition, the economic status of a company or a country is often said to have an impact on the investments in health. If a country or a company is doing well economically, usually there has also been more money to pour into health-related programs. (Hämäläinen, 2009)

An increasing trend among companies has also been that they have started using monetary incentives to encourage employees to take care of their wellbeing. (Leino & Olsson, 2004) One problem with this has been that workplace wellbeing programs have generally been seen as a thing only large organizations can afford. Even with the increased exposure to workplace wellness, there is very little proof on the cost-effectiveness of wellness programs for small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs). The SMBs often don't have the same resources to put into the wellbeing of its employees and have less expertise in occupational safety and health. (Hughes, Patrick, Hannon, Harris, & Ghosh, 2011) According to Carter, Gaskins & Shaw (2005) less than 10% of small businesses offer workplace wellbeing programs to their employees. Considering the fact that the majority of workers are employed by SMBs, the focus in the near future should be on how the SMBs could also benefit from these programs (Schulte & Vainio, 2010). Hughes et al. (2011) have suggested that the promotion of these workplace wellbeing programs should be more linked to the company overall success such as financial success, employee engagement, productivity, and recruitment. The importance of engaging the employees will only get bigger as millennials have a tendency of having lower engagement levels to their employers as the older generations (Caraher, 2015).

Lately, the academic conversation has also indicated that workplace wellbeing is a part of a bigger context and improving wellness at work go beyond work-related aspects. Yet, work-related and non-work factors are usually treated separately in today's corporate world. (Schulte & Vainio, 2010) A majority of employees' most widespread and significant diseases and health conditions, such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, depression, and obesity are not entirely caused by workplace hazards, but work can clearly aggravate many of these conditions. (Wynne-Jones, Buck, Varnava, Phillips & Main, 2009) In today's world, where sickness is a growing industry, one goal for the workplace wellbeing programs should be how people can avoid these diseases and conditions, and how companies can decrease the costs associated with work-related diseases, accidents, and injuries. (Hämäläinen, 2009)

3. MILLENNIALS

As the older generations are gradually retiring from the workforce, one of the monumental challenges for companies in the near future will be replacing these older workers with new talent. Between 2020 and 2030 the majority of the workforce is going to be represented by a diverse and interesting group of people, millennials. This means that companies will need to understand this generation to effectively attract, manage, and especially maintain their top employees. Understanding the millennials is also crucial in order to be able to develop workplace wellbeing programs that align with their needs and expectations. (Kumar, 2015; Twenge et al., 2010)

3.1. MILLENNIALS AS WORKERS

Generally speaking, Baby Boomers were said to “live to work”, while Generation X and millennials “work to live”, meaning Baby Boomers placed a higher priority on their careers than the younger generations (Lancaster & Stillmann, 2003). According to several previous anecdotal reports, millennials are said to value work-life balance more than the older generations and they want jobs that shelter their personal lives and families. Usually, these kind of jobs mean that the employer gives its employees flexibility. Having a chance of going part-time or even leaving the workforce momentarily to have children or to travel with family and friends are among factors millennials put high importance on. (Moritz, 2014; Caraher, 2015; DeVaney, 2015) In addition, an increasing trend among young workers is that they want more flexible schedules and a possibility to work at home or at a cafeteria. Where technology has certainly helped to make this a reality for several millennials, the majority of companies still want most employees to show up to the office at a specific time. On the contrary, the millennial generation is also said to have more individualistic traits than the older generations. As work is seen mostly as a personal goal, millennials would then put more priority on their careers, leaving the question of career importance speculative. (Twenge et al., 2010)

The concept that external rewards such as salary, other materialistic ownerships, and reputation are the main elements that motivates us to work is as ancient as the scientific research of work itself (Thorndike, 1911). Millennials are more likely to believe there's more to life than a big paycheck. Given the facts that their parents didn't spend that much

time at home because of long working hours, and because they entered the workforce with a need for a dual-income household, increased working hours, and limited holiday time, it's no wonder this cohort values leisure time more. (Twenge et al. 2010). This is in accordance with the findings of Smola & Sutton (2002), who found out that work ethic and work centrality have been decreasing while leisure values have been increasing recently.

Intrinsic rewards comprehend of being motivated to work not only for the money but for your own work's sake. A job is generally characterized as intrinsically motivating when it's challenging enough, interesting, offers responsibility and variety, has a notable impact on others, and allows the employee to see the outcomes of the work. (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Caraher (2015) has suggested that individuals of the younger generation prefer to work at smaller organizations where they believe they will have a more significant role and make a greater impact. According to Lancaster & Stillman (2003), Arnett (2004), and Moritz (2014) millennials put higher value on intrinsic rewards than Baby Boomers and Generation X. However, according to the findings of Twenge et al. (2010) millennials wouldn't value intrinsic rewards as much as the older generations.

The combination of valuing leisure time more, and not wanting to work as much as before but still expecting good salary demonstrates the imbalance between expectations and reality the millennials have as regards work. According to Twenge et al. (2010), this can also be linked with the increase of narcissistic traits associated with this generation because narcissism is strongly connected with unrealistic risk taking and overconfidence. As Brown (2017) pointed out, millennials also have great, sometimes eccentric, expectations towards their work life. Others feel that young workers expect the employer to adjust to their needs. Moreover, millennials also expect diverse work assignments, fast advancement in the corporate ladder, and especially, frequent performance feedback. Where the Baby Boomers and the Generation X relied more on the "no news is good news" philosophy, today's young workers seek positive and encouraging support more often than the annually held performance reviews. When it comes to career advancement, millennials believe that it should be based more on performance rather than seniority or experience. (Alsop, 2008; Moritz, 2014)

Components of intrinsic motivation also include social rewards like making friends at work, and sense of feeling connected. (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Although it seems like millennials have a constant need of being connected through the various social networking

applications, according to Twenge et al. (2010) they tend to place less importance on social rewards than the older generations. The increase of narcissistic traits might have something to do with this because they are commonly linked with problems in close relationships (Campbell, 1999). Being so reliant using technology, millennials may not rely work to offer them new friendships because their smartphones give them a chance to stay connected to their friends and family outside the workplace (Prensky, 2001). The decreased desire to gain friends from work aligns with the increased importance of leisure time. After working the whole day with with the same group of individuals, millennials might rather dedicate their spare time to social actives with people outside the work environment.

Millennials are acknowledged as “digital natives” while Baby Boomers and even some of Generation X are “digital immigrants”, people who appeared online after being offline for a major part of their lives. The “digital natives” depend on using technology to quickly exchange information through their smartphones’ numerous applications. (Prensky, 2001) The takeaway for companies should be that millennials expect immediate engagement in two-way conversations, which means that they prefer text-messaging and social networking over using email. (Alsop, 2008)

The technological development has also led to a growth in “adulolescents”, young adults who remain dependent both financially and emotionally of their parents (DeVaney, 2015). Shaputis (2014) even called millennials as the “Peter Pan generation” for delaying taking steps towards their adulthood and postponing moving out of their parents’ house. When mobile phones and computers didn’t exist, parents sadly said goodbye to their children as they moved out to go to university or work. In generations past, parents were fortunate to hear from their kids even once a week, whereas today’s parents often communicate with theirs on a daily basis. This has lead to parents being involved in their children’s lives in university and even in their work careers. One side product of the continuous support and forever caring parents is that millennials prefer checklists and direction at work. They are effective when given well-defined instructions, but often struggle under high-pressure decision making tasks. As a result of this, the young workers often desire a well-defined and planned work life, something which is ambiguous in today’s dynamic and complex work environment. (Alsop, 2008)

As already stated, the millennials have lower engagement levels to their employers than the older generations, which means they are less likely to spend their whole work career

with one company. (Caraher, 2015; Kumar, 2015) A part of the millennials' lack of loyalty towards employers can partly be explained with the fact that many saw their parents getting laid off by their companies due to outsourcing or downscaling (Twenge et al., 2010). Moreover, millennials don't see job-hopping as a barrier for their careers and have no problem of having multiple employers on their resumes during the same year (Brown, 2017). For companies this means that the ones that are able to keep their best performers in-house, could reap business success compared to companies with high employee turnover. (Twenge et al., 2010)

Millennials are also more socially responsible than the Baby Boomers and Generation X. In fact, over 50 percent of millennials report that they individually have a need to make a difference in the world and they would not work for a socially irresponsible company. (Alsop, 2008) According to Moritz (2014) individuals of the millennial cohort are not afraid to leave a company if its purpose doesn't support their own values. Many millennials also want to work in a place where every action the company takes represents their values. Furthermore, millennials are more likely to want a job abroad than the previous generations. The younger generation looks for international adventures and is interested of making new connections, learning new abilities, and having experiences abroad that take them further in their careers. (LaCore, 2015) This is good news for companies as the workforce crisis will certainly create more opportunities for millennials to relocate to a foreign country (Starck et al., 2014).

3.2. MILLENNIALS' CHARACTERISTICS

Traits associated with the younger generation include optimistic, civic-minded, generous, and impatient. Their competitive hunger has also led to them being more anxious, stressed out, and sleep deprived than the Baby Boomers and Generation X. Furthermore, millennials are often seen as impolite and entitled when asked by the older generations. (DeVaney, 2015)

Generally speaking, millennials also tend to live hectic and busy lifestyles and they usually look for fast, flexible, and handy alternatives that are available on the go. As already stated, they are "digital natives" – the only generation that grew up with technologies like mobile phones, video games, the Internet and social media. Nowadays more than 80% of millennials have a smartphone and almost everyone sleeps right next to it, meaning they

are pretty much connected and reachable 24 hours a day seven days a week. Moreover, the first video game systems were launched during the 1980's so it's no wonder that individuals of the younger generation play twice as much video games on a daily basis than the older generations. Gaming also appeals to millennials' competitive desire. (Kumar, 2015) What makes this notable is that according to a recent study by Rupp, Sweetman, Sosa, Smither & McConnell (2017) playing video games casually on your smartphone is an effective way to battle stress during workdays.

According to Fronstin & Emlinger (2017) millennials are more likely to take action towards their health and wellbeing than Baby Boomers and Generation X. The technological development has also boosted a phenomenon called quantified self movement. According to Kumar (2015), over 40% of the younger generation keep track of their own health with phones, smart watches, or pedometers. Not only can the technology nowadays keep track on steps and walking distance but there are various mobile applications that measure calorie intake, blood sugar, heart rate, sleep quality and more. When millennials were asked what health and wellbeing meant to them 60% thought being physically fit was a top priority. Having a good work-life balance (57%), not being ill (50%), being able to cope with stress (47%), and being happy (47%) also received high percentages among this cohort. (Kumar, 2015)

A defining characteristic for millennials is also said to be multitasking. Not only are they continuously connected through their smartphones, but they also like doing several things simultaneously. For example, millennials often watch television or listen to music while doing their homework. Although multitasking may sometimes be beneficial, many critics suggest that it can lead to difficulties in social skills, attention, and interfere with writing and reading performances. (Alsop, 2008)

4. WORKPLACE WELLBEING IN THE EXAMPLE COMPANIES

The two example companies and their offered wellbeing programs will be introduced in this part of the study. The aim for this research was to get a sample of one smaller (SMB) and one bigger company. The offered workplace wellbeing programs were limited to what the companies have offered during the last year and what they are going to offer in the near future.

4.1. COMPANY X

First of the examined companies, representing SMBs, is a sports and leisure time department store operating in the south-eastern part of Finland. In this study the company will be called X due to their wish to stay anonymous. The person who answered the questions for them called herself a controller, meaning she had a high managerial role in the company. Currently Company X employs approximately 50 employees with slight variations depending on the season. Interestingly, only a couple of the 50 employees represent the millennial generation. As a sports and leisure time department store the baseline is that the employees of the company are more interested in their health and wellbeing. The controller also stated that many of the employees do sports together on their free time as a hobby. Company X's yearly budget for workplace wellbeing varies depending on the economic state of the company, but the usual cost for a one-time event has generally been around 2.000 euros. The person responsible of workplace wellbeing in the company is the store manager. However, the events are sometimes planned and organized by the regular staff. The company's goal regarding workplace wellbeing is to support employees' working ability and minimize the sick days among them.

Currently, Company X doesn't offer any workplace wellbeing programs per se for its employees, but they organize various one-time wellness events every year and support their employees' wellbeing with other activity. The full health care service in addition to the ones required by the law could be seen as one of the best perks the company offers to its employees. As a sports department store, the offered wellbeing events have mostly something to do with sports or the physical aspect of health. For example, one of the previous one-time events consisted of trying out different sports. Moreover, the company is

getting free tickets for top league sports games every month from teams they collaborate with and they also have an ice hockey team that practices on a weekly basis. In addition, the annually held Christmas parties and feedback talks could also be counted towards workplace wellbeing. In the near future the goal is to offer “Smartum” exercise coupons so that the employees can choose their preferred way of doing sports by their own.

The problem with some of the events have been the low participation percentages. According to the controller, about half of the employees usually participate in the events. In addition, the demand for the top league game nights has sometimes been bigger than the given five tickets. She also added that the participation percentage is usually higher when the event is organized by the managers.

4.2. PIPELIFE FINLAND

Representing a big company in this research is a plastic pipe manufacturer and marketer, PipeLife Finland. PipeLife Finland is a part of the second biggest pipe concern in Europe. The concern is one of the world’s leading plastic pipe system suppliers and it currently operates in 26 countries worldwide. The concern’s headquarters is located in Vienna, Austria, while PipeLife Finland’s main office is located in Oulu, Finland. In addition to Oulu’s headquarters, the company has seven places of business in Finland. (PipeLife.com, 2017) The questions were answered by PipeLife Finland’s project manager with some help from the CEO. Currently out of the pipe supplier’s 153 workers in Finland, 35 represent (23%) the millennial generation. According to the CEO, PipeLife Finland’s budget for workplace wellbeing is approximately 80.000 euros annually. Each of the company’s eight business units have a separate person in charge of their workplace wellbeing. However, according to the project manager the baseline is that everyone is responsible of their own wellbeing. PipeLife’s goal regarding workplace wellbeing is to be the industry leader among workplace wellbeing and –safety. The company aims for a zero-policy in accidents, because according to the project manager all of them can be avoided. Moreover, PipeLife is paying close attention to leadership skills because the company considers it as a component that has a major effect on the work environment and workplace wellbeing in general. As an achievement of their good work towards workplace wellbeing the company has been in the top five of Finland’s GPTW (Great Place to Work) list each of the last eight years. In 2010 and 2011 the company also cracked the top 25 list

of Europe's GPTW. Currently PipeLife Finland uses about four business days in a year for different workplace wellbeing activities.

As already stated, each of Finland's business units has a separate person in charge of the workplace wellbeing. Their job is to create a wellbeing plan for the unit for two years ahead. All of the business units have a workplace wellbeing program called LifeFit. However, since the programs are designed by different people, they all differ a little bit from each other. The example used in this study is a program designed for PipeLife's factory in Utajärvi, Finland.

The LifeFit workplace wellbeing program consists of both social events, personal perks and educational parts. During last year at Utajärvi's factory every employee got a gym membership card and "Smartum" exercise coupons to take care of their physical health in a way they preferred. They also had a kilometer competition where the aim was to encourage workers to take the bike to work. During the winter the factory even organized stations where the employees could fix and maintain their cross-country skis. The company also hosted an ice hockey tournament where every business unit competed against each other. Another part of the LifeFit-program has been the nutritional lectures. The social events of the workplace wellbeing program feature karaoke-nights and team workshop days. Both of them have been organized about once in a quarter. The team workshops usually also include some sort of physical activity. Furthermore, PipeLife Finland offers a wide variety of health services for its employees. For example, at Utajärvi factory the main focus has been on workers' musculoskeletal symptoms. That's why the company has been offering up to ten treatments per year for each of the employees. In addition, PipeLife consistently checks and maintains their work environment in order to keep the employees healthy. For example, ergonomics, dust and noise levels, and electrical safety are among things they keep track of.

According to the project manager, the participation percentages vary depending on the activity, situation, and time. She added that it's nearly impossible to get everyone to participate, but the CEO hosted workshops have usually been very popular among employees. PipeLife Finland plans to continue with the LifeFit program in the near future.

5. RESULTS

This part of the study is used to portray the findings of the eleven semi-structured interviews. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part emphasizes on the results of millennials' relationship towards workplace wellbeing and wellbeing in general, whereas the second part focuses more on the beliefs and expectations towards workplace wellbeing programs.

5.1. MILLENNIALS AND WELLBEING

Generally, the interviewed Master's students put a high priority on their wellbeing. They understand that health and wellness is a sum of many factors, and that all of the factors link together. Five of the interviewees stated that the most important part of wellbeing to them is that they feel healthy both physically and mentally, and that they don't have any diseases. Interestingly, only one of the interviewees mentioned work-life balance as the most essential factor. Rest of the interviewees stated that social wellbeing is the most important factor for them. For example, one interviewee said that:

"To me wellbeing means having time and money to do stuff I like with my family and friends"

Almost all of the graduating students also said that workplace wellbeing is a huge part of their wellbeing since a big portion of their days consist of work. Many seemed to think that if you don't feel well at work, it will probably also affect your wellbeing outside of work. That is why all of the interviewees thought that it is important that companies take care of their employees' wellbeing.

"Companies should absolutely address workplace wellbeing. If you take care of the employees, they will take care of the business"

The millennials also added that if a company supports their wellbeing it clearly has an effect on the motivation and engagement towards the company. Many seemed to think that workplace wellbeing is not a priority when searching for a job, but it will most likely have an impact on whether they will stay at the company for a longer period of time.

Even if workplace wellbeing consists of many factors, many of the millennials seemed to think that the overall atmosphere at work is one of the most important features to them. Many stated that if they like the people they work with, it's much more fun to work. It also affects how you feel about going to work every day.

"If you generally don't feel annoyed about going to work, then you're probably good"

As the graduating business students rack up work experience, the expectations regarding workplace wellbeing are getting bigger. Many of the interviewees mentioned flexibility as a top priority when talking about the workplace wellbeing of their future employer. They also clearly valued flextime jobs and possibility to work from home or a cafeteria. However, they added that they still enjoy working from the office and would only use remote working when they have something else on their agenda or feel a little bit sick. The interviewees also wanted their managers to trust them more. They felt like the continuous hovering around them only affected their work negatively. Furthermore, over half of the interviewees also mentioned work ergonomics as a top priority. Almost everyone with a sitting job mentioned electric tables as an important component of their wellbeing at work. Moreover, several of the Master's student mentioned feedback as a very important factor of wellbeing and felt like companies were not giving them enough of it.

"I worked for a year at a company and never got any feedback. I guess I did alright but it would have been nice to know if I could have done something better"

One of the interviewees said that she doesn't expect too much from her future employer regarding workplace wellbeing, but she wants all the basics to work. By that she meant respecting the contract and overtime hours. If the company doesn't respect what it has promised, it has a major negative impact on the company.

5.2. INTERVIEWEES' BELIEFS AND EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS WORKPLACE WELLBEING PROGRAMS

Even if some of the interviewees had very little actual working experience, almost all of them had participated in some sort of workplace wellbeing program or event. For example, these events and programs included workshop days, after works, different sports events, educational lectures, team dinners, different kind of parties, and exercise campaigns. Even

though all the graduating students had participated in some sort of wellbeing event, the general opinion clearly seemed to be that the companies in Finland don't address enough workplace wellbeing. The opinion might have had something to do with the fact that some of the interviewees only had had summer jobs before this interview. According to one of the Master's students, companies in Finland don't offer their summer workers the same opportunities as their regular employees. He continued that he wasn't allowed to participate in a wellbeing program that took place during the summer even if he was ready to pay for it by himself. Another one of the interviewees stated that it's also important to offer the summer workers some sort of wellbeing programs as they're also a part of the company.

“After the first day of our summer work this company had organized a really cool event for all of the summer interns. It made me feel like the company cared about us even if we only were summer workers.”

Interviewees' overall attitude towards workplace wellbeing programs seemed to be very positive. The opinion whether the workplace wellbeing programs should be more continuous and systematic activity or one-time events split up evenly between the interviewees. They stated that the programs and events are important parts of getting to know your co-workers and that they bring something extra to the otherwise normal weeks. In addition, the offered programs make you feel like the company cares about you as an individual. A couple of the interviewees even said that although they wouldn't always participate in the programs, only knowing about them is usually enough to make you feel like the company cares about you. However, even if the overall attitude towards the programs seemed positive, a few individuals mentioned that they sometimes feel like some of the educational lectures are obvious and they are skeptical if the wellness campaigns actually will work in practice.

“I mean it's nice that they're organizing stuff, but I'm pretty sure everyone will forget everything in like two weeks and then we're back to square one. It just feels like a waste of time.”

The graduating business students have big expectations towards workplace wellbeing programs. The majority of the interviewees stated that they expect fun activities with their colleagues. The individuals seemed to think that the workplace wellbeing programs and

events should to feature sports and activities they normally wouldn't do on their spare time. For example, paintball, climbing, bowling and other extreme sports were mentioned during the interviews. The interviewees also wanted to get to know the people they work with and they also tended to be interested of seeing their co-workers outside of the office in a more casual setting. Many also said that these events are important to make yourself friends from the office. One of the interviewees said that the best part of the programs is that it brings all employees and managers to the same level.

"There I was partying and drinking wine with the CEO of a big company. It felt pretty surreal."

Another one of the interviewees stated that he expected companies where the employees sit during the work day to focus more on the physical activity programs. He also expected more ergonomics out of the workplace wellbeing programs.

"I feel like being active is very catchy. If you see your co-workers working out it can also get yourself going. It also works the other way around. If you just see everyone sitting all day, it affects your energy levels negatively."

In addition, one of the interviewees said she expected to have a balance in the offered programs.

"I expect companies to address both the physical and the social part of wellbeing. It's not workplace wellbeing if there are only parties or gym access."

Out of the offered programs the only ones that didn't really appeal to the millennial mindset were group physical activity classes and some of the educational programs. The trend appeared to be that the Master's students have specific physical activity preferences and that's why they would rather go to the gym without an instructor. However, the baseline seemed to be that the interviewees would be ready to try out almost everything if the offered program matched with their schedule.

Interestingly, all of the interviewees said that they wouldn't have a problem spending their own spare time to these workplace wellbeing programs if they enjoyed the people they worked with. Only a couple of the students said that they would rather attend a workplace

wellbeing event during week days or on a Saturday, while others stated that the time of the week didn't matter to them. However, the general opinion seemed to be that if an event is held after working hours, the expectations are bigger. The interviewees also added that they wouldn't attend an optional educational lecture after working the whole day. Moreover, one of the interviewees had a good point about their life situation.

"It wouldn't be a problem to attend the events at this age. As a parent they might feel like a little extra."

About half of the interviewees also brought up money when talking about the wellbeing programs. They seemed to think that they wouldn't have a problem taking care of some of the costs by themselves if they had input in the planning of the activity. However, the overall opinion was that this only applies to the activity parts whereas the employer should always pay for the offered dinners and parties.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Even if workplace wellbeing has come a long way in the corporate world and the offered wellbeing programs have developed from delivering gym access to addressing all aspects of health through a wide variety of programs, it still seems like they have a minor role in Finnish companies. According to the interviewees, many of the big companies in Finland offer very few or no workplace wellbeing programs at all for their employees. The findings of Aura et al. (2016) support this, as wellbeing is a part of the measured strategy in only 9% of all companies in Finland, and only about one third have some sort of goal regarding wellbeing of their employees. The lack of systematic effort towards workplace wellbeing in companies is partly explained by the economic success of the businesses. (Hämäläinen, 2009) This is also what the controller in Company X said, as their budget for workplace wellbeing varied every year depending on their success. Moreover, some companies have recently started using monetary incentives to encourage employees taking care of their health (Leino & Olsson, 2004). As smaller businesses rarely have same resources to put into wellbeing as bigger companies, the differences between the offered programs can easily get highlighted (Hughes et al. 2011). This trend could also be seen in the example companies, as PipeLife Finland had a bigger budget and workplace wellbeing offering than the smaller Company X.

The only organizations that clearly set apart positively regarding workplace wellbeing were the tech companies. The interviewees who worked for these companies stated that the reason behind it is the shortage of skilled coders in Finland. In order to attract new capable coders to the firm, they need to address wellbeing to stand out of the competition. Currently, the other industries have plenty of workforce to choose from, but it will most likely change in the near future as the big generations are slowly retiring from the workforce. Between 2020 and 2030 the shortage of human capital will create severe challenges for companies – for example attracting and maintaining young talent (Twenge et al., 2010; Strack et al., 2014). This means that companies now have an opportunity to prepare themselves for the competition and learn from the example of the tech industry. Changing the company culture now to address more workplace wellbeing might have far-reaching consequences on business success in the future.

Generally speaking, millennials tend to be very interested in workplace wellbeing and wellbeing in general. The findings of Fronstin and Emlinger (2017) support the results the

of the interviews. Individuals of this cohort understand that not feeling well at work most likely affects their overall wellbeing. The fact that people spend a big part of their days at work, made the interviewees think companies should increasingly take care of their employees. As Kumar also (2015) pointed out, the millennials believed that addressing wellbeing has a major impact on the motivation and engagement towards the employer, and that way affects the time they are willing to spend at one company. An important factor for the Master's students regarding workplace wellbeing seemed to be flexibility. Ability to work remotely and have flexible schedules were among factors they put high value on. They also wanted managers to trust them more and give them certain freedom while working. Moritz (2014), Caraher (2015), and DeVaney (2015) also found these kind of results in their reports.

For millennials work still has a significant social meaning even if Twenge et al. (2010) identified that the social reward of work has been decreasing with the younger generations. Wellbeing at work for this cohort has a lot to do with the people they work with. The interviewees want to know their co-workers on a more personal level and they expect to make new friends at work. Their main expectations towards workplace wellbeing programs also included opportunities to see their co-workers in a more social setting and being able to tie new friendships. Low participation rates of workplace wellbeing companies may therefore also be a sign of low team spirit among the employees, and that the workers don't like spending time with each other.

The graduating business students expect fun activities, like climbing, paintball and other extreme sports, from the workplace wellbeing programs. This could be linked with the findings of LaCore (2015) as millennials want to experience new adventures. In firms where the employees sit the majority of the day, the interviewees wanted more physical activity and ergonomics out of the programs. Interestingly, electric tables seemed very popular among them. Moreover, it seemed like they didn't have a problem helping with some of the costs regarding the organized events. They also stated that they don't necessarily expect the programs to be held during office hours, and don't mind spending their leisure time for these activities, even though leisure time is something they put high value on. (Twenge et al. 2010). Therefore, it seemed like the interviewees believed that the programs give them more than they take.

As workers, millennials expect more feedback from their employer than the older generations (Alsop, 2008). The importance of feedback also came up during the interviews. In the future, companies should consider having feedback talks more frequently than once a year. A good idea to combine both wellbeing and feedback is to have active meetings in the near environment. Going for a walk to the nature is also completely free, so it also fits companies with smaller budgets. Moreover, companies should also take advantage of the technologically reliant generation that loves multitasking (Prensky, 2001). The market is full of different smartphone based health applications that can be used to boost the quantified self movement phenomenon among the cohort. An example of a workplace wellbeing program that tackles the social aspect, technology, and millennials' competitive nature, is a workplace walk-off challenge where employees rack up steps as groups. Implementing a program like this could also be very cheap, as the majority of the millennials own a smartphone and can use it to keep track of the steps. (Kumar, 2015). Another example of a fairly cheap and easily organized workplace wellbeing program would be hosting company dinners once or twice a month after the work day. The employees could also have a chance to take their friends and family to the event.

Even if case studies fit well as a methodology to understanding a certain phenomenon, they also have their weaknesses. The results of this study most likely can not be generalized to a widespread population. With a sample of this size, it's also easy to say that the statistical significance of this research is unclear. As the interviewees conducted of individuals from one social media account, it is also possible that similar kind of people were selected to the sample. Therefore, it could mean that the selection was biased, and the results could then overstate or understate the current situation regarding workplace wellbeing in Finland. (Flyvbjerg, 2011) It is also possible, that out of the fifteen interview invitations, only people who had something to say about workplace wellbeing answered positively to the request. However, even with these scientific weaknesses, this research has its own strengths. The sample conducted evenly of both men and women, and they represented different universities. The participants were also from different cities in Finland, and not only from the Helsinki area, for example. In addition, the provided information from the companies could also be held as cornerstones for this study. Without any real life examples the research hadn't been that interesting.

Even if the results of this study can not be generalized to the whole population, they offer valuable information about the millennials' expectations towards workplace wellbeing and

–programs. An interesting follow-up research would be re-doing a similar study with a statistical method. The complementary researches would then probably provide a complete insight about the wellbeing factor among the millennial generation. This information could be highly valuable to companies as they prepare for the oncoming workforce crisis (Stark et al. 2014).

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APPENDIXES

QUESTIONS FOR THE COMPANIES

1. What does wellbeing mean to you?
2. How is workplace wellbeing shown in your company?
3. What is the age distribution in your company?
4. What are the goals regarding the workplace wellbeing programs?
5. How much employee time (during working hours) are you willing to invest during a year?
6. What is your budget for these programs per year? (*You can skip this question if you don't want to answer*)
7. Who is responsible of the workplace wellbeing in your company?
8. What kind of workplace wellbeing programs have you offered during the last year?
What are you planning to offer in the near future?
9. How do the offered programs support the company strategy?
10. What has the participation percentage been?
11. What kind of feedback have you gotten?
12. Have you taken employee needs into consideration when deciding on offered programs?
13. What has been the biggest success/failure from your perspective regarding workplace wellbeing programs?

QUESTIONS FOR THE GRADUATING BUSINESS STUDENTS

1. What does wellbeing mean to you?
2. How do you define workplace wellbeing?
3. What does it mean to you?
4. Where have you worked before?
5. What kind of workplace wellbeing programs have you participated in?
6. What did you think about the programs?
7. What you you expect from these programs?
8. Have you been offered programs that you didn't participate in?
9. What kind of workplace wellbeing programs does your current employer offer?
10. Do you think wellbeing should be addressed by companies?
11. Would you rather take care of your wellbeing outside of work?
12. What do you expect from your future employer regarding workplace wellbeing?
13. What has been the biggest success/failure from your perspective regarding workplace wellbeing programs?
14. Are you willing to spend your own spare time on workplace wellbeing programs?