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**Organizational strategies and human resource management practices of
employee well-being**

Csilla Molnár

Supervisor: Dr. habil. Imola Csehné Papp
Associate Professor

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS THAT THE DISSERTATION IS BASED ON.....	3
2. INTRODUCTION	4
3. LITERATURE BACKGROUND	6
3.1. The organization and strategic human resource management.....	6
3.2. Human resource management practices supporting employee well-being	7
4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS	8
5. RESEARCH STRATEGY	10
5.1. Adapting the research methodology to the research objectives	10
5.2. Research design.....	10
6. NEW AND INNOVATIVE RESULTS, THESES.....	14
6.1. Consistency between the output expectations of organizations regarding the employee well-being strategy and the human resource management practices	14
6.2. Exploration, identification and categorization of human resource management practices supporting employee well-being	18
6.3. The adaptability of employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices through employee participation and involvement.....	20
6.4. Employee perception on employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices	21
6.5. The determining factors of employees' feelings about work	23
6.6. The adaptability of employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices in comparison with employee perceptions.....	24
6.7. Conceptualizing employee well-being	26
7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE APPLICATION OF RESULTS, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH PLANS.....	31
8. CONCLUSIONS.....	32
9. REFERENCES	33
10. LIST OF OWN PUBLICATIONS	39

1. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS THAT THE DISSERTATION IS BASED ON

The dissertation is based on the following publications edited into a unified structure. Chapters include complete, unchanged and extended parts of the publications.

Molnár, C., Csehné Papp, I., & Juhász, T. (2024). Organizational strategies and tools of employee well-being as perceived by employees. *Management & Marketing*, 19(2), 336-361. <https://doi.org/10.2478/mmcks-2024-0015>

Molnár C., & Csehné Papp, I. (2024). Organizational strategies and human resource management practices to support the improvement of employee wellbeing. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research (JEECAR)*, 11(6), 1043–1065. <https://doi.org/10.15549/jeecar.v11i6.1906>

Molnár Cs., & Csehné Papp I. (2024). A munkavállalói jóllét hatása a szervezeti mutatókra. [The effect of employee well-being on organizational indicators]. *Új Munkaügyi Szemle* 2024/2. <https://doi.org/10.58269/umsz.2024.2.5>

Molnár Cs., & Csehné Papp I. (2023). Review of human resource management practices supporting the development of employee wellbeing. *Új Munkaügyi Szemle* 2023/3. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58269/umsz.2023.3.2>

2. INTRODUCTION¹

In the rapidly changing work environment employees' well-being is gaining attention as a crucial factor in ensuring organizational success and employee satisfaction. The organizational strategy of employee well-being might be a determining factor for the future labor market and economic efficiency (ENWHP, 2018; OECD, 2019). Elevating the topic to the level of organizational strategy might be necessitated by the changing technological, environmental, organizational culture (Groysberg et al., 2018) and labor market trends (Agarwal et al., 2019; Cantrell et al., 2024; FMLSA, 2017; Hesketh & Cooper, 2019; Millar et al., 2018; Pózner & Kozák, 2024). World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2025) and might provide competitive advantage and enhanced brand image (Fehér & Reich, 2020; Szabó & Juhász, 2019).

The concept of employee well-being covers a wide spectrum of an individual's working life (Schulte & Vainio, 2010), which is determined by their general bio-psycho-social well-being, the efficiency and long-term functioning of the organizations and of the society in terms of health and productivity of the economy (Sharpe & Mobasher Fard, 2022). Schulte and Vainio (2010) connect employee well-being at work with productivity, when describing it as a "summary concept that it characterizes the quality of the part of life spent at work, including aspects of occupational health, safety, occupational safety, and workplace atmosphere, which can significantly determine productivity at the individual, corporate and social levels" (Schulte & Vainio, 2010 p. 422.).

The literature review provides an overview of the wide range of interpretations and definitions of well-being. However, there is no unified approach regarding the concept, components and measurement of well-being or well-being at work (Schulte & Vainio, 2010; Szombathelyi, 2012; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2013; Pradhan & Hati, 2019). Since lacking a common definition, from the various terminologies (Laine & Rinne, 2015) employee well-being has been applied in the study, expressing the employee focus in its comprehensiveness.

¹ The chapter is based on and contains complete and unchanged parts of the following publications:

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Molnár, C., Csehné Papp, I., & Juhász, T. (2024). Organizational strategies and tools of employee well-being as perceived by employees. *Management & Marketing*, 19(2), 336-361.

Therefore, the following approach to employee well-being has been applied: beyond the quality of life that is spent at work (Eurofound, 2019; 2021), employee well-being also includes the employees' perception and evaluation regarding the quality of life, their psychological and social functioning (Keyes et al., 2000).

Although employee well-being is a determining factor for future labor market and economic efficiency (OECD, 2017), the examination of employee well-being at the level of organizational strategy appears little in the focus of research. Even though organizations might shift their focus towards employees, customers, communities, and social relationships, emphasizing corporate social responsibility (Agarwal et al., 2019; Porter & Kramer, 2002; Stankevičiūtė & Wereda, 2020), little is known about how employee well-being appears in the strategy of organizations, and what human resource management (HRM) practices and workplace methods are applied to promote it (Kun et al., 2017). There is little research available (Wognum & Fond Lam, 2000) that examines the adaptability of the employee well-being strategy and practices from the perspective of employees as stakeholders (Freeman et al., 2021).

Therefore, the study focuses on the exploration of organizational strategy and tools of employee well-being in Hungarian and international economic organizations. The objective is to explore how the examined organizations deal with the theme of employee well-being at the level of strategic human resource management (SHRM) and how they support it through their practices. Due to limited studies on employee well-being strategy, the methodology of the research is an exploratory sequential mixed research method, with an embedded case study (Creswell & Clark, 2018) considering an inductive approach (Babbie, 2014). The research involves a multi-stage process of qualitative and quantitative sections in data collection and analysis. The research intends to expand the existing knowledge in the field of employee well-being (Kun et al., 2017) by establishing theory and meaning of the phenomenon with the method of Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Charmaz, 2006). The study identifies well-being-oriented HRM practices of the examined organizations. The adaptability of well-being strategy and practices is examined through employee perceptions.

The novelty of the research is that it focuses on the previously separate human resource management practices supporting employee well-being (Guest, 2017, 2024) in a comprehensive context, and explores the strategic approach of organizations to employee well-being (ENWHP, 2018). The study aims to expand the existing knowledge in the field of conceptualizing employee well-being.

3. LITERATURE BACKGROUND²

Literature reviews have concluded that the main focus of research is psychological and eudaimonic (Loon et al., 2019; Szántó et al., 2016). Although the number of studies has increased, there are few about HRM models (Peccei et al., 2013) and no unified well-being concept is defined (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2013).

Zhang (2020) points out that there is no uniformly accepted concept of the relationship between HRM practices and employee well-being. Studies on the impact of HRM practices on employee well-being - and through this on organizational performance - show contradictory results (Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019). In the literature of examining employee perception of HRM practices, the application of strategic human resource management process as a theoretical framework (Van Beurden et al., 2022) and the importance of communication between employer and employees (Wang et al., 2020) stand out.

3.1. The organization and strategic human resource management

The open system model of organizations (Mullins, 2016) presents the continuous interaction of organizations with their environment, transforming inputs through their systems, and emitting outputs that become inputs to other organizations. Inputs are the skills, abilities and characteristics of employees, which are transformed by HRM practices to achieve output results, such as employee satisfaction, performance, retention (Kozák, 2023), or well-being.

The strategic human resource management process model (Nishii & Wright, 2007) illustrates the complex relationship between the organization and employees, mediated by HRM practices (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). SHRM considers employees as critical resources in the implementation of organizational strategy (Colbert, 2004). Mapping stakeholders' needs supports to define strategic purpose and direction (Freeman & McVea, 2001). Being critical resource (Barakonyi, 1999) employees also form a group of stakeholders, whose needs shall be understood for a positive employee experience (Plaskoff, 2017; Vereb et al., 2025).

² The chapter is based on and contains complete and unchanged parts of the following publications:

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Molnár Cs., & Csehné Papp I. (2024). A munkavállalói jóllét hatása a szervezeti mutatókra. *Új Munkaügyi Szemle* 2024/2.

3.2. Human resource management practices supporting employee well-being

Regarding the impact of human resource management practices on employee well-being (Zhang et al., 2020), it was found that the three dimensions of HRM practices - ability, motivation and opportunity - have a positive effect on the components of employee well-being (life, work, psychological well-being).

The Ability - Motivation - Opportunity (AMO) theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000) embedded in industrial and organizational psychology (Paauwe, 2009) relates to the psychological mechanism between HRM practices and employee well-being (Zhang et al., 2020). The purpose of HRM practices is threefold: to improve employees' skills and abilities, to motivate them to perform, and to offer opportunities for development and success. As a frequently applied theoretical framework for examining human resource management (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023), the AMO theory underlines that HRM practices support employee well-being (Zhang et al., 2020). Study (Pagán-Castaño et al., 2020) has explored the positive impact of employee-oriented HRM practices on employees' well-being and confirmed the AMO theory through the mediating role of well-being between HRM practices and organizational performance (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Nishii & Wright, 2007). Deriving from the AMO theory and based on the studies (Kellner et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2020; Bos-Nehles et al., 2023), Figure 1. has been constructed to summarize HRM methods.

1. Figure. Summary of human resource management practices of employee well-being

Ability enhancing HRM practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose: Developing employee knowledge and skills to achieve organizational goals• Output: Resources to achieve career and development goals -> higher employee well-being• HRM Practices: Training and development, recruitment
Motivation enhancing HRM practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose: Increasing the external and internal motivation of employees to increase performance• Output: The feeling that the organization appreciates the efforts -> higher employee well-being• HRM Practices: Rewarding, remuneration, recognition, performance management
Opportunity enhancing HRM practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose: Motivation of employees to generate ideas, to take responsibility for realization of goals• Output: Fulfillment of self-actualization needs -> higher employee well-being• HRM Practices: Employee involvement, participation, communication, decentralization, autonomy

Source: Own editing based on Zhang, X., Lin, Z., Liu, Y., Chen, X., & Liu, D. M. (2020).

How do human resource management practices affect employee well-being? A mediated moderation model. *Employee Relations* 42(4), 903- 919.

The ability, motivation and opportunity dimensions of HRM practices positively affect employees' well-being, life, work and psychological well-being (Zhang et al., 2020). However, in their critical review, Kellner et al. (2019) claim inconsistency of the model. In terms of comprehensiveness, the AMO theory fits the exploratory approach, therefore chosen as a theoretical background of the research.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Research questions (RQ), objectives (RO) and hypotheses (H), as well as research design are deriving from the major theme of exploration of employee well-being.

Research objectives

The main research objective is:

RO: The main objective of the research is to explore how the investigated organizations deal with the theme of employee well-being at the level of strategic human resources management and how they support it through their practices.

There are four *sub-objectives* deriving from the above main objective:

RO1. Exploring employee well-being strategy and HRM practices of the examined organizations.

RO2. Exploring adaptability of employee well-being strategy of the examined organizations from the perspective of organizational output expectations and employee perceptions.

RO3. Exploring employees' perception of employee well-being in the examined organization.

RO4. Identifying and creating theory for the meaning of employee well-being.

Research questions

RQ1. What organizational strategy and toolkit do the examined organizations have to promote employee well-being?

RQ 1.1. What is the well-being strategy of the organizations?

RQ 1.2. What are the output expectations of the organization regarding the application of employee well-being strategy and toolkit?

RQ. 1.3. With what means and methods does the organization implement its well-being strategy?

RQ 2. Which methods and tools of workplace learning and adult training do the organization use to promote employee well-being?

RQ 3. With what processes and methods does the organization ensure the adaptability of the employee well-being strategy to changing environmental and labor market conditions and employee perception?

RQ 3.1. On what scientific, professional or other findings and sources does the organization base its employee well-being strategy and the application of its tools?

RQ 3.2. What is the relationship between the employee well-being strategy and environmental and labor market factors?

RQ 3.3. What are the methods of employee involvement in the organizations examined regarding the formation and operation of the employee well-being strategy?

RQ 3.4. In what way does the organization measure the needs of the employees regarding the development of well-being, the use of tools, and how does it integrate the results of this back into the planning of the well-being strategy?

RQ 3.5. To what extent does the use of the organization's well-being tools by employees justify the organization's employee well-being strategy?

RQ 4. What is the employee perception of employee well-being in the examined organization?

RQ 4.1. What tools does the organization use to measure employee well-being?

RQ 4.2. Which elements from the toolbox of the organization's well-being strategy do the employees use and to what extent?

RQ 4.3. What does employee well-being mean for employees?

RQ 4.4. Does a family-friendly organizational strategy make employees feel that well-being is important?

RQ 4.5. What are the distinctive factors of employees' positive and negative feelings about work?

RQ 4.6. How employees' approach to well-being can be described through HR practices and tools?

Hypotheses

Due to the constructive and sequential nature of the exploratory research method, new research questions emerged during the case study. Therefore, RQ4.4 and RQ4.5 questions are also expressed in the form of hypotheses, and analyzed in the quantitative phase:

Hypothesis 1. Employees consider that employee well-being is important for the organization, and it is identified with family-friendly strategy and tools.

Hypothesis 2. Within the organization, employees' positive and negative feelings about work depend on gender, age, education, and position.

5. RESEARCH STRATEGY³

5.1. Adapting the research methodology to the research objectives

The methodology of the research is exploratory sequential mixed method research with an embedded case study (Creswell & Clark, 2018). It exhibits the characteristics of both qualitative (Flick, 2002) and quantitative research (Bryman, 2006; Kása & Réthi, 2017). The purpose of applying this research methodology was to carry out a customized qualitative and quantitative analysis, as there is no tool available for examining well-being in a strategic context. Following Charmaz's (2006) constructivist Grounded Theory approach, the focus is on the phenomenon of employee well-being.

5.2. Research design

The complexity of the research concept, its objectives, stages, sampling and the methods of data collection are presented in the research plan (Figure 2.).

I. Literature review: Theory and previous research results of the topic are explored, however, continuously carried out during the research supporting concept development (Dunne, 2011).

II. Research questions and objectives: Research questions and objectives have been established deriving from the major research theme supported by the literature review.

III. Exploratory research phase: An exploratory investigation is carried out about the employee well-being strategy and HRM practices of organizations of access-based targeted HR and other leaders and HR professionals of Hungarian and international economic organizations in Hungary. This research phase consisted of two sub-phases, a qualitative and a quantitative part.

- *III/a. Exploratory qualitative research:* Semi-structured, targeted in-depth expert interviews of 60-90 minutes with open-ended questions were conducted. Interviews have been conducted with 27 HR leaders, experts and other leaders of for-profit organizations. The interviews have been recorded, transcribed and translated to English. The content analysis of the interviews was carried out with Atlas.ti program. Several rounds of open coding of

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Molnár C., & Csehné Papp, I. (2024). Organizational strategies and human resource management practices to support the improvement of employee wellbeing. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research (JEECAR)*, 11(6), 1043–1065.

line-by-line coding and axial coding have been performed to discover the concepts behind the interviews. During the axial coding, the search for connections between concepts served the purpose of grouping similar concepts into categories. Selective coding was applied to examine the relationship between the categories and to create the main categories of the theoretical model (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The purpose of the qualitative phase was also to develop a survey tool for the examination of employee well-being strategy.

- *III./b. Exploratory quantitative research:* The self-developed online questionnaire has been used on an access-based targeted sample of 62 HR experts. The descriptive analysis of the results has been utilized for designing the case study process.
- *Results of the III. Exploratory research phase:* The qualitative and quantitative data integration and interpretation supported to define selection criteria of organization participating in the case study, to design the case study and a survey tool for exploring employees' perception on well-being.

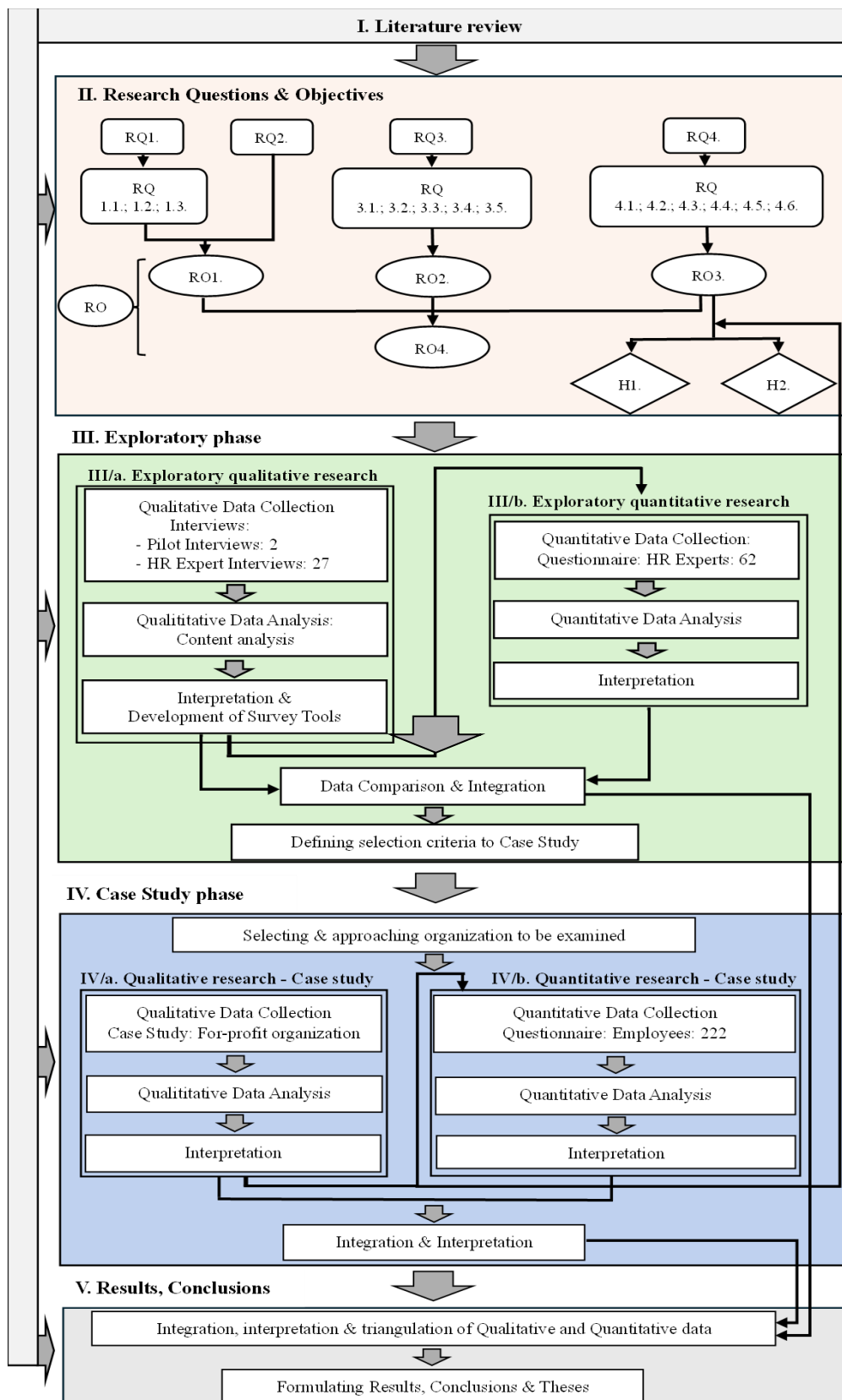
IV. Case study research phase: An organization has been selected and requested from the organizations participated in the qualitative phase to participate in the case study.

- *IV/a. Qualitative research within Case study:* The employee well-being strategy and toolkit of the organization were explored with interviews, field work and document analysis.
- *IV/b. Quantitative research within Case study:* This sub-section served two purposes. The adaptability of the organization's well-being strategy and HRM practices has been investigated through employees' perception. On the other hand, the employees' feelings, level of well-being and view of well-being have been detected. A questionnaire has been developed based on the previous exploratory results.
- *Results of the IV. Case study research phase:* The well-being strategy and the HRM practices of the examined organization have been identified. During data integration, employees' perceptions of well-being have been explored regarding the perceived availability, utilization, and preferences of well-being tools.

Integration and interpretation of results of III. Exploratory and IV. Case study research phases: The integration and interpretation of results have been carried out with the method of Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Sallay & Martos, 2018; Mitev, 2012) to investigate the phenomenon.

V. Results, conclusions, theses: Results, conclusions have been determined, and theses have been formulated.

2. Figure. Research design



Source: Own editing based on Creswell & Clark (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage publications. 3rd Ed. p.300 & p.312.

Sampling

There were two target groups of the research following the exploratory and case study research phases. The sample for the interviews consisted of 27 HR leaders, HR professionals, and other functional leaders of Hungarian and international economic organizations utilizing an access-based nonprobability targeted expert sampling technique (Babbie, 2014). A bigger number of HR leaders and experts (n=62) have been recruited for the expert questionnaire. The second sample consisted of both the leaders, HR experts and the employees of the case study organization. In the case study semi-structured interviews (7) have been conducted with leaders and HR professionals and 222 employees participated in the survey with 78.44% response rate.

Measuring tools

- *Interview protocol:* The semi-structured expert in-depth interview protocol has been designed on the experiences of pilot interviews.
- *Expert questionnaire:* For the construction of the self-developed online measurement tool, the AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000,) served as a conceptual background.
- *Employee questionnaire:* A self-developed online questionnaire has been designed based on the results of the qualitative exploratory phase. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the respondents' specifics. The second focused on employees' perceptions on the well-being strategy and related HRM practices provided by the case study organization. The third part consisted of the Workplace PERMA Profiler questionnaire (Kern, 2016). Seligman's PERMA profile (2011; 2018) defines five pillars of well-being: Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment. The Workplace PERMA Profiler (Kern, 2016) has been adapted to work context, as workplaces attribute a significant role in positive emotions, relationships, meaningful work, success, and involvement (Kun et al., 2017; Kun & Szabó, 2017). It also examines factors of negative emotions, health, and loneliness (Butler & Kern, 2016; Kern, 2016).

6. NEW AND INNOVATIVE RESULTS, THESES⁴

The research results, their integration and interpretation, have been summarized in response to research objectives, research questions and supported to formulate the theses.

6.1. Consistency between the output expectations of organizations regarding the employee well-being strategy and the human resource management practices

Strategic consciousness of examined organizations regarding employee well-being

In contrast to literature that emphasizes the operation of organizations along strategies (Wright et al., 2018), and considering employee well-being strategy as a competitive advantage in the labor market (Androniceanu et al., 2020), HR expert interviews revealed that despite its importance, organizations do not have a defined and conscious strategic approach to employee well-being. Elements of well-being strategy and planning are present at 62% of the organizations participated in the questionnaire (Table 1.)

1. Table. Employee well-being strategy at examined organizations

Employee well-being strategy exists				There is no employee well-being strategy		
62%				38%		
Well-being strategy is defined in (number of feedbacks with multiple choices)						
HR Strategy	Well-being strategy	Budget	Learning & Development	Would be important	No information about it	No need for it
27	15	13	5	13	9	1

Source: Own editing

Since examining employee well-being as a strategy did not appear in the focus of prior research (Kun et al., 2017; Wognum & Fond Lam, 2000), it is a new result, that interpretation of employee well-being as a strategy – either at organizational or strategic HRM level - is not common among the examined organization. Rather random elements of strategic planning are

⁴ The chapter is based on and contains complete and unchanged parts of the following publications:

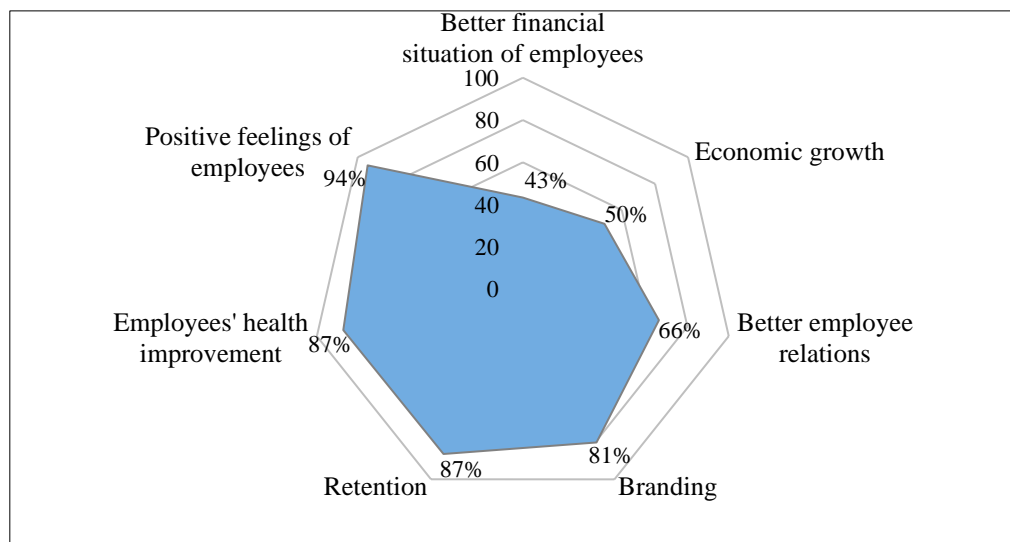
Molnár, C., Csehné Papp, I., & Juhász, T. (2024). Organizational strategies and tools of employee well-being as perceived by employees. *Management & Marketing*, 19(2), 336-361.

Molnár C., & Csehné Papp, I. (2024). Organizational strategies and human resource management practices to support the improvement of employee wellbeing. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research (JEECAR)*, 11(6), 1043–1065.

available incorporated into the HRM strategy. The promotion of employee well-being appears mainly in operative HRM practices in the examined organizations.

The output expectations of the examined organizations regarding the improvement of employee well-being have been identified and categorized (Figure 3.). The most desired outcome of organizations is that employees have ‘Positive feelings’ (94 %), including that they are feeling well, satisfied and engaged towards the organization. In contrast to literature (Bartels et al., 2019; Cooper et al., 2019; Rampazzo et al., 2013), a less expected organizational-related output is the ‘Economic growth of the company’ (50%). The least expected outcome is the achievement of a ‘Better financial situation of employees’ (43%).

3. Figure. Expectations of organizations from the development of employee well-being by major categories (% of organizations)



Source: Own editing

HRM practices to support employee well-being at the examined organizations

The identified practices are presented according to the AMO theory (Appelbaum, 2000).

a) HRM Practices of training and development to support employee well-being

Training and development programs are mostly offered to support employees' professional knowledge (90%) at the examined organizations. Leadership development (85%), mentoring (70%), and supporting further studies (70%) are also highly ranked in their ability-enhancing portfolio, similarly to international survey results (Reward management survey, 2022).

The skill development programs which are offered by 67% of the organizations might overlap with time- and stress-management programs. Despite the importance of the mental health-related training programs (Johnson et al., 2020), the least available training programs are the physical (22%) and mental (27%) health and career planning (40%) related programs at the examined organizations.

Since well-being is often associated with health, and workplace learning might be relevant in developing knowledge about health, therefore the survey specifically asked about health-themed training and development programs. Results show that organizations have first aid training (77%), time management (45%) and information sessions on healthy lifestyle and nutrition (38%). Although work-related stress is the most common problem at workplaces in Europe (Paoli & Merllié, 2001; Szabó & Juhász, 2019), only 37 % of the examined organizations offer stress management programs to improve the mental health of their employees. Programs for quitting smoking (10%), improving sleep health (13%), or psychology-themed programs (18%) are the least present.

b) HRM Practices of rewards management to support employee well-being

Regarding reward elements (Armstrong, 2010; Poór et al., 2018; Reimagining Work and Rewards Survey: 2021 – 2022; WorldatWork, 2007) by the examined companies, the following groups have been identified: ‘Financial’, ‘Health’, ‘Sports and Recreation’, ‘Work environment’, ‘Housing’, and ‘Mobility’. In terms of variety, the examined organizations put emphasis on financial benefits similarly to earlier research results (Reward management survey, 2022). Survey results show that the top five benefit elements are commuting support (92%), performance bonus (88%), gifts for occasions like Christmas or Women’s Day (88%), occupational health service (87%), and private usage of company phones (78%). Despite organizations could recruit employees beyond the commuting range since home-office has spread as a result of changes in work organization due to pandemics, the financial contribution to overhead cost of home-office is available only at 10% of the companies examined. This is in contrast with the widespread availability of home-office, as 43% of organizations offer weekly 2-3 days home-office for their employees. The least provided benefits are the ones that support housing and relocation, which might reflect their expensive nature and that companies are managing their workforce supply from the geographical range of potential daily commuting. Very few of the responding companies provide workers’ hostel (13%), relocation support (13%), and health-related benefits, such as dental treatment (17%) or physiotherapy (17%), although the overall need for health-related benefits outweighs all other benefit types.

c) HRM Practices promoting social well-being through community events

In line with the importance of social well-being (Guest, 2017) based on the theory of basic needs (Keyes, 1998), survey results show that examined organizations intend to enhance their employees' social interactions with various activities. Examined organizations consider teambuilding events (97%) in terms of increasing cooperation, similarly to events related to Christmas celebrations (93%). Employee life-cycle-related events like the celebration of anniversaries of employment or retirement (67%) are showing their importance. Organizations involve employees in activities, such as donations (72%) and voluntary activities (50%), in this way expanding social relations to the greater communities.

Examining consistency of output expectations and HRM practices supporting employee well-being at examined organizations

The output expectations have been compared with their HRM practices supporting employee well-being. Results show that the implemented HRM practices of the examined organizations are not fully consistent with their output expectations.

Consistency identified:

- The strong presence of community event related practices is in accordance with the expected outcome that employees have positive feelings as a result of well-being-oriented strategy and practices.

Inconsistencies identified:

- The leading output expectation is to improve and maintain their employees' health, however, the goal of employees' health promotion is rarely present in the form of health promotion benefits and programs.
- The goal of 'Better financial situation of employees' appears less often as an expected outcome in the examined sample, however, the HRM practices are characterized by a dominance of monetary elements.

The exploration of employee well-being strategy and HRM practices of the examined organizations have led to the formulation of Thesis 1.

Thesis 1 – New result

Regarding the consistency between the output expectations of organizations from the employee well-being strategy and the utilized human resource management practices, results have led to the formulation of the following thesis.

Thesis 1. In the examined organizations, there is an inconsistency between the output expectations related to the employee well-being strategy and the applied human resource management practices.

Related research questions: [RQ1.], [RQ1.1.], [RQ1.2.], [RQ1.3.], [RQ2.], [RQ3.], [RQ3.1.], [RQ3.2.]

Related research objectives: [RO1.], [RO2.]

Related own publications: [P1], [P2], [P3], [P4], [P5], [P6], [P7], [P8], [P17], [P20], [P21]

6.2. Exploration, identification and categorization of human resource management practices supporting employee well-being

From the results of qualitative exploratory survey, a wide range of well-being-oriented practices have been identified and categorized according to Appelbaum's (2000) Ability – Motivation – Opportunity theory (Figure 1.) at the examined organizations.

As a new result, a comprehensive toolbox of the 'Employee well-being-oriented human resource management practices' (Table 2.) has been established. The identified HRM practices at the examined organizations are characterized by the dominance of monetary benefits, that consist of short-term financial, recreational, health benefits, employee life-cycle benefits, and long-term care benefits. Training and development programs are classified into professional, organizational, developmental and health-related categories. Health promotion programs cover physical and mental health improvement programs. Social well-being is aimed at community events.

Results have led to the formulation of Thesis 2.

2. Table. Employee Well-being-Oriented Human Resource Management Practices

Benefits							
Short term monetary		Recreational		Health related		Employee lifecycle & situation	
B1	Loyalty bonus	B10	Variable benefit system	B7	Occupational health service	B8	Schooling support
B2	13th month salary	B18	Recreational variable benefit system		B9	Medical checks	B12
B3	Commuting support			B14	Health insurance	B16	Social, funeral support
B4	Performance bonus	B32	Cultutral, sport tickets	B20	Glasses support	B21	Salary advancement
B5	Gifts	B34	Vacation, recreation support	B23	Specialists' Medical checks	B22	Kinder garden support
B6	Performance based wage					B37	Rental support
B11	Overhead cost support	B36	Sport support	B24	Healthfund	B38	Relocation support
B15	Company car usage, sharing, parking	B40	Company gym	B33	Vaccination	B39	Workers hostel
	Private usage of phone	Work environment		B42	Dental service	Long term care & counselling	
B19	Company bus	B13	Rest area	B45	Massage	B25	Voluntary pension fund
B27	Meal support, canteen	B43	Dog friendly office	B46	Physiotherapy	B26	Stock option
B28	Partner discounts					B30	Study contract
B29	Home-office overhead cost					B41	Financial counselling
B31	Fruit day					B44	Mental counselling
B35	Own product discount					B47	Legal counselling
Learning & Development programs							
Job role & competencies		Organizational		Advancement		Health	
LD2	Professional	LD1	Team cooperation	LD5	Leadership development	LD1	Training on physical
LD6	IT, computer	LD3	Mentoring	LD8	Career planning	LD1	Training on mental health
LD13	Language	LD4	Knowledge sharing	LD10	Study contract		
LD9	Soft skill development	LD7	Coaching	LD11	Support to higher & secondary education		
Health development programs							
Information sharing		Physical health		Psychological health			
H1	Covid related	H5	Healthy lifestyle, nutrition	H3	Time management		
H2	First aid			H4	Self-awareness		
		H7	Sleep-health	H6	Stress management		
		H9	Quitting smoking	H8	Psychology themed		
Community events							
Joint activities		Family		Charity		Mixed	
C1	Teambuilding events	C3	Family day	C6	Donations	C8	Events related to world days
C2	Christmas dinner, party	C7	Santa's celebration	C9	Blood donation		
C4	Company trip			C11	Volunteering	C10	Employee classified & social ads
C5	Employee anniversaries, retirement						
C12	Joint sports activity						

Source: Own editing

Thesis 2 - Innovative and new result

From the exploration, identification and categorization of human resource management practices supporting employee well-being, research results have led to the formulation of the following thesis.

Thesis 2. The Ability-Motivation-Opportunity Theory (AMO Theory, Appelbaum, 2000) is suitable for categorizing HRM practices aimed at employee well-being, and with its help, a comprehensive toolkit of ‘Employee Well-being-Oriented Human Resource Management Practices’ (Table 2.) has been created.

Related research questions: [RQ1.], [RQ.1.3.], [RQ 2.]

Related research objective: [RO1.]

Related own publications: [P1], [P2], [P3], [P4], [P5], [P6], [P7], [P8], [P9], [P10], [P11], [P12], [P14], [P15], [P17], [P18], [P19], [P20], [P21], [P22]

6.3. The adaptability of employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices through employee participation and involvement

In contrast to the employee-related output expectations of the examined organizations (Figure 3.), the structured and systematic methods of employee involvement and participation through strategic and business planning are less utilized by the examined organizations. Employees’ feedback as a method of participation is considered as a major source of information for developing employee well-being strategy and HRM practices for the examined organizations; however, the collection of inputs is less structured, not regular, and not systematic. Therefore, examined organizations maintain their leading role in formulating their employee well-being strategies and human resource management practices. Employees – as key stakeholders in organizational success – are considered as subjects of well-being development rather than as involved partners in the development of employee well-being.

Results have led to the formulation of Thesis 3.

Thesis 3 - New result

Regarding the adaptability of employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices in the perspective of employee participation and involvement, research results have led to the formulation of the following thesis.

Thesis 3. Contrary to the employee-related output expectations of the examined organizations, the involvement and participation of employees in the strategic and business planning of well-being related strategy and human resource management practices, applying structured and systematic methods are not common at the examined organizations.

Related research questions: [RQ3.], [RQ3.3.], [RQ3.4.]

Related research objective: [RO2.]

Related own publications: [P1], [P2], [P3], [P4], [P5], [P6], [P7]

6.4. Employee perception on employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices

According to the exploratory nature of the research, during the case study a new research question (RQ4.4.) has emerged and has been transformed into Hypothesis 1.

H1: Employees consider that employee well-being is important for the organization, and it is identified with family-friendly strategy and tools.

Analysis of case study results has revealed the lack of defined well-being strategy at the examined company. The organization has a ‘family-friendly workplace’ strategy to support employees’ quality of life and to attract potential future employees as a distinctive factor in employer branding in the competitive labor market. Although, a wide range of HRM practices have been identified at the examined organization (Table 3.), a conscious strategic planning and execution is missing in the field of employee well-being. Employee satisfaction surveys are not conducted systematically, and results are not utilized for improving the adaptability of well-being-oriented HRM practices, and communication towards employees. Tools that exist at the examined organization are indicated with grey in Table 3.

3. Table. Employee Well-being-Oriented Human Resource Management Practices at the examined company

Benefits									
Short term monetary		Recreational		Health related		Employee lifecycle & situation			
B1	Loyalty bonus	B10	Variable benefit system	B7	Occupational health service	B8	Schooling support		
B2	13th month salary	B18	Recreational variable benefit system			B12	Child birth gift		
B3	Commuting support			B9	Medical checks	B16	Social, funeral support		
B4	Performance bonus	B32	Cultutral, sport tickets	B14	Health insurance	B21	Salary advancement		
B5	Gifts	B34	Vacation, recreation support	B20	Glasses support	B22	Kinder garden support		
B6	Performance based wage			B23	Specialists' Medical checks	B37	Rental support		
B11	Overhead cost support	B36	Sport support			B38	Relocation support		
B15	Company car usage, sharing, parking	B40	Company gym	B24	Healthfund	B39	Workers hostel		
		Work environment		B33	Vaccination	Long term care & counselling			
B17	Private usage of phone			B42	Dental service				
B19	Company bus	B13	Rest area	B45	Massage	B25	Voluntary pension fund		
B27	Meal support, canteen	B43	Dog friendly office	B46	Physiotherapy	B26	Stock option		
B28	Partner discounts					B30	Study contract		
B29	Home-office overhead cost					B41	Financial counselling		
						B44	Mental counselling		
B31	Fruit day					B47	Legal counselling		
B35	Own product discount								
Learning & Development programs									
Job role & competencies		Organizational		Advancement		Health			
LD2	Professional	LD1	Team cooperation	LD5	Leadership development	LD1	Training on physical		
LD6	IT, computer	LD3	Mentoring	LD8	Career planning	LD1	Training on mental health		
LD13	Language	LD4	Knowledge sharing	LD10	Study contract				
LD9	Soft skill development	LD7	Coaching	LD11	Support to higher & secondary education				
Health development programs									
Information sharing		Physical health		Psychological health					
H1	Covid related	H5	Healthy lifestyle, nutrition	H3	Time management				
H2	First aid			H4	Self-awareness				
				H7	Sleep-health			H6	Stress management
				H9	Quitting smoking			H8	Psychology themed
Community events									
Joint activities		Family		Charity		Mixed			
C1	Teambuilding events	C3	Family day	C6	Donations	C8	Events related to world days		
C2	Christmas dinner, party	C7	Santa's celebration	C9	Blood donation				
C4	Company trip			C11	Volunteering	C10	Employee classified & social ads		
C5	Employee anniversaries, retirement								
C12	Joint sports activity								

Source: Own editing

Employees of the case study organization answered in the questionnaire the open question of what employee well-being means for them. Results showed that employee well-being is a complex phenomenon for employees of the examined organization, including earning for living, work-life balance, adequate work environment, good atmosphere, physical and mental well-being, but overall well-being means that they have positive feelings at the workplace. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 has been rejected, and Thesis 4. has been formulated.

Thesis 4 – New result

Regarding the employee perceptions on employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices, research results have led to the rejection of Hypothesis 1. and led to the formulation of the following thesis.

Thesis 4. The examined company of the case study pays attention to the well-being of its employees, but the respondents in the given sample interpret employee well-being as more complex than family-friendly tools that help to balance work and private life.

Related research questions: [RQ4.], [RQ4.3.], [RQ4.4.]

Related research objectives: [RO3.]

Related own publications: [P1], [P2], [P4], [P6]

6.5. The determining factors of employees' feelings about work

According to the exploratory nature of research, a new research question (RQ4.5.) emerged in the case study and Hypothesis 2. has been defined.

H2: Within the organization, employees' positive and negative feelings about work do not depend on gender, age, education, and position.

Research findings support earlier studies and literature (De Simone, 2014; Fisher, 2014), as subjective well-being at work includes positive feelings about work, good mood, cognitive assessment, job satisfaction, social well-being and negative feelings experienced at work.

The analysis focused on how employees feel during work and what personal factors influence their feelings. Based on the survey results, no correlation has been found between work-related feelings and employees' individual characteristics (gender, age, education, position) in the given sample. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 has been rejected, and Thesis 5. has been defined.

Thesis 5 – New result

Regarding the determining factors of employees' feelings about work, research results have led to the rejection of Hypothesis 2. and to the formulation of the following thesis.

Thesis 5. Within the examined organization of the case study, employees' positive and negative feelings about work do not depend on gender, age, education, and position.

Related research questions: [RQ 4.], [RQ 4.5.]

Related research objective: [RO3.]

Related own publications: [P1], [P2], [P4], [P6]

6.6. The adaptability of employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices in comparison with employee perceptions

Based on the interviews of the qualitative research phase within the Case study, the identified 'family-friendly employer' strategy is not supported by the employee satisfaction surveys and well-being related employee communication at the examined organization due to the inconsistencies of execution.

Based on the Workplace PERMA Profiler (Kern, 2016) individual and organizational level well-being indicators were created for exploring employee perceptions and preferences regarding well-being-oriented HRM practices at the case study organization. Despite lacking a conscious strategic approach, employees' positive perception is reflected in the overall Workplace PERMA profile of the organization.

The individual and the organizational level well-being indicators together with the toolbox of the ‘Employee well-being-oriented human resource management practices’ (Table 2.) have been applied for the exploration of employee perceptions and preferences on well-being. Results highlighted that employee needs are satisfied mainly with short-term monetary tools. Long-term health development programs are missing at the examined organization, although they could contribute to the renewal of human assets, could support employee engagement and organizational performance (Shuck et al., 2017; Shuck & Reio, 2014; Sutton et al., 2016).

The comparison of the perceptions by employee groups of ‘Above’ and ‘Below’ level of well-being compared to the overall organization well-being indicator concluded in the following results:

- Employees’ preferences indicate that the case study organization covers diverse employee needs with well-being practices and tools. However, differences of perceptions and high number of uncertain responses might reflect the deficiencies of employees’ understanding of the phenomenon of well-being and related tools, and the lack of defined well-being strategy and conscious communication.
- Both employee groups of ‘Above’ and ‘Below’ the overall organization well-being indicator found monetary benefits, community events and a good workplace atmosphere available and useful. Community events might support employees’ needs for a good atmosphere.
- The perceived lack of physical and mental health-related benefits, recreational and development programs might leave expectations unsatisfied for the employee group of below the level of overall well-being indicator.

The research provides a new utilization of Workplace PERMA Profiler for examining the adaptability of employee well-being strategy and HRM practices. Results have led to the formulation of Thesis 6.

Thesis 6 – Innovative and new result

Examining the adaptability of employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices to employee needs and perceptions, research results have led to the formulation of the following thesis.

Thesis 6. The Workplace PERMA Profiler (Kern, 2016) is a suitable tool for determining organizational- and employee-level well-being and related indicators. By applying the organizational- and employee-level well-being indicators together with the ‘Employee Well-being-Oriented Human Resource Management Practices’ toolbox (Table 2.), the Workplace PERMA Profiler (Kern, 2016) is suitable for exploring employees’ perceptions of HRM practices and for exploring the ability of well-being-oriented strategies and HRM practices to adapt to employee needs.

Related research questions: [RQ3.], [RQ 3.5.], [RQ 4.], [RQ 4.1.], [RQ 4.2.], [RQ 4.6.],

Related research objectives: [RO1.], [RO2.], [RO3.]

Related own publications: [P1], [P2], [P4], [P5], [P6], [P7], [P8]

6.7. Conceptualizing employee well-being

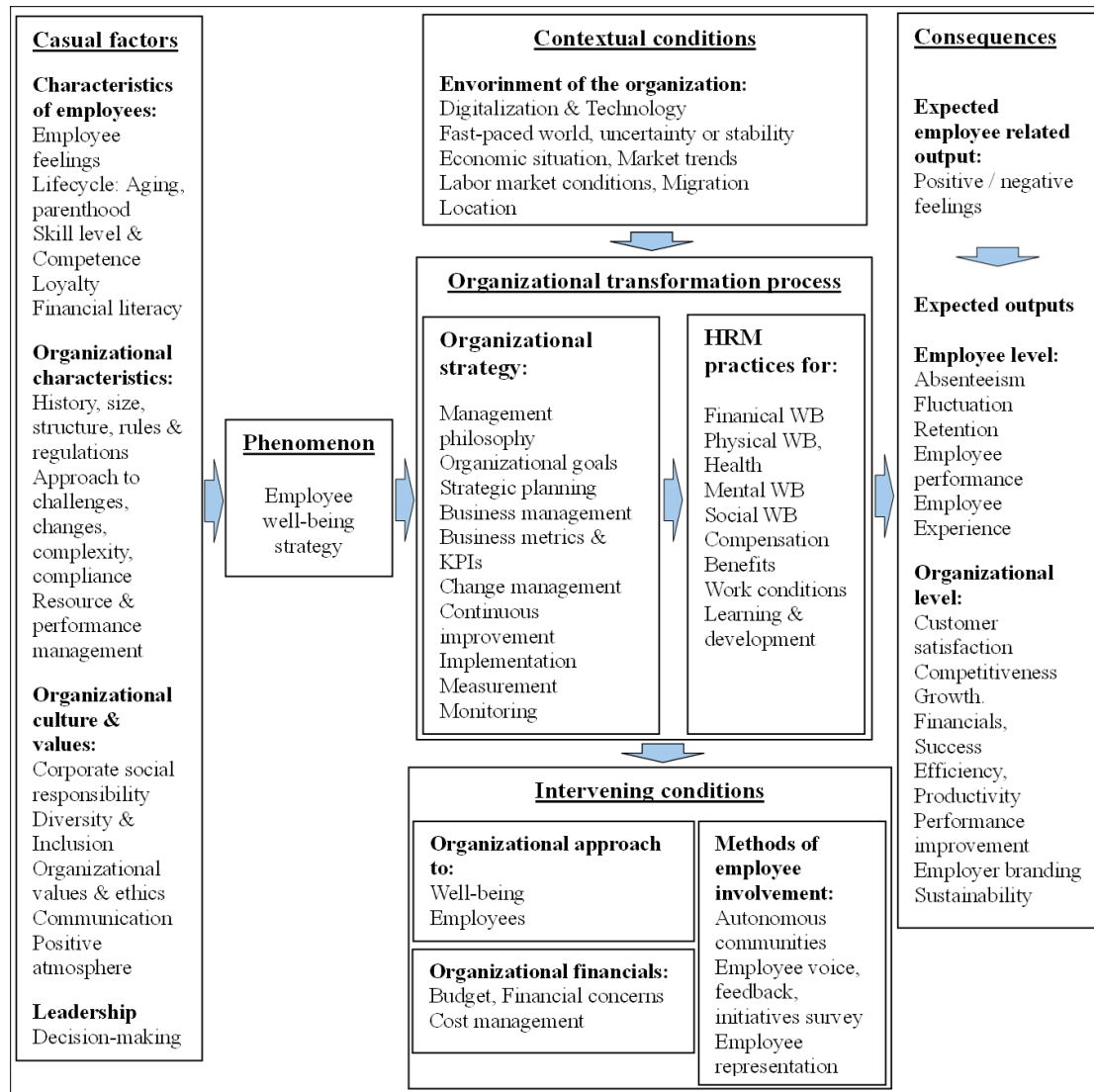
Since there is no unified approach regarding the definitions, concept, components and measurement of employee well-being (Schulte & Vainio, 2010; Szombathelyi, 2012; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2013), results of the exploratory research provided the opportunity to add a new approach to the understanding of the phenomenon. Applying the method of Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Charmaz, 2006) has led to the creation of a conceptual model, the construction of meaning for the phenomenon of employee well-being and the definition of theory on the purpose of developing employee well-being.

The conceptual model of employee-well-being strategy and HRM practices

Considering the open system model of organizations (Mullins, 2016) and based on the analysis of expert interviews, the conceptual model (Taheri et al., 2018) of employee-well-being phenomenon has been created (Figure 4.).

The model identifies casual factors, contextual and intervening conditions that influence employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices. Due to the transformational process of the organization through the well-being oriented HRM practices and tools, employees' feelings result in employee- and organizational-level outputs.

4. Figure. Conceptual model of employee-well-being strategy and HRM practices



Source: Own editing based on Taheri, F., Jami Pour, M., & Asarian, M. (2018). An exploratory study of subjective well-being in organizations–A mixed method research approach. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 29(4), 435–454. p.8.

The meaning of employee well-being

The construction of meaning for employee well-being has emerged from the data of both the exploratory and the case study research phases. As new results, the meaning of employee well-being according to HR experts and employees in the sample has been defined.

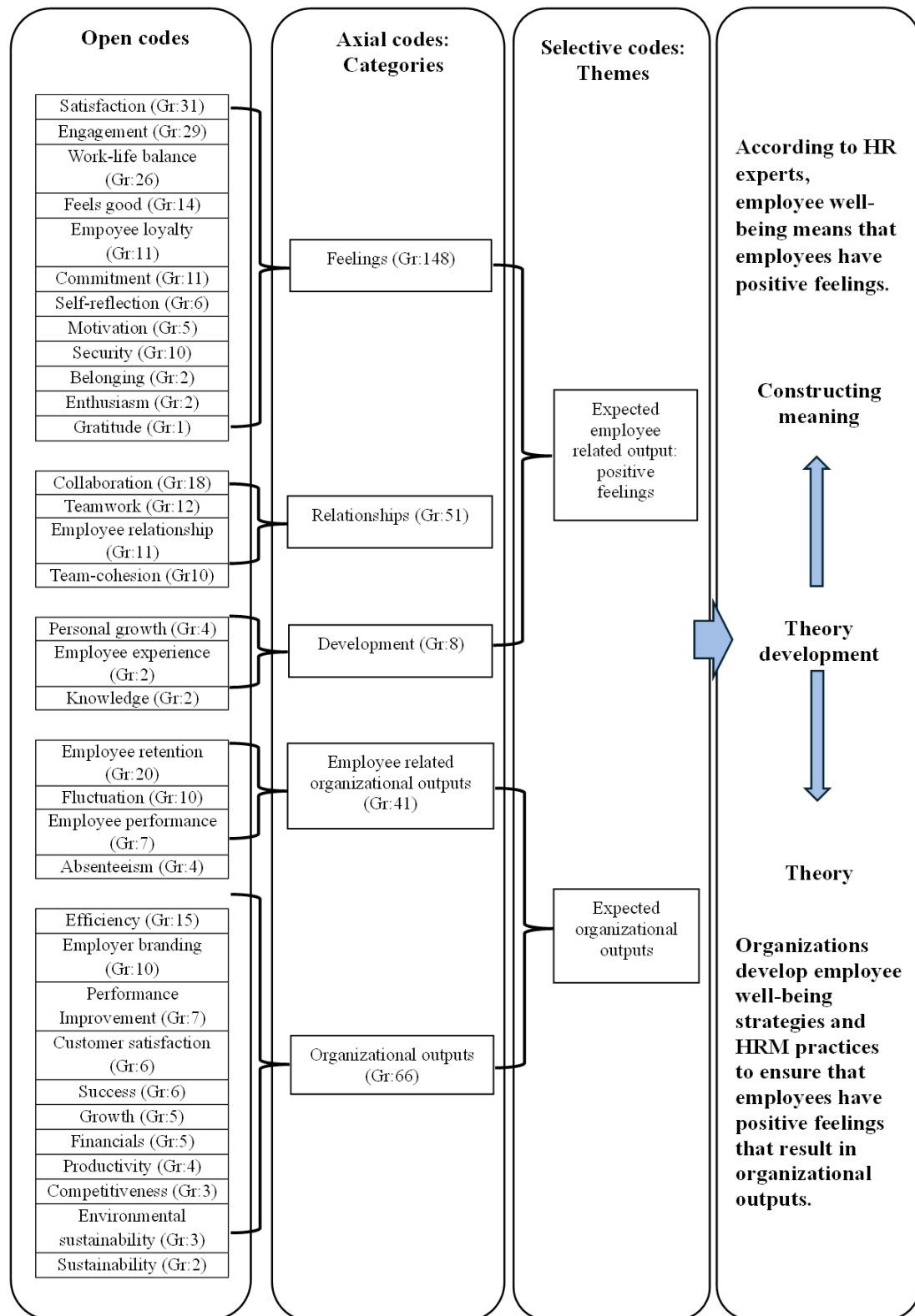
According to HR experts, employee well-being is mainly characterized by employees' positive feelings. Although, the sample of employees examined have also identified positive feelings, but with a more complex approach, consisting of financial security, work-life balance, a proper work environment, mental and physical well-being, and a good atmosphere at work. Therefore, "Employees' positive feeling" is concluded as a comprehensive interpretation of employee well-being, however employees' aspects are more detailed versus experts' view.

Theory on the purpose of developing employee well-being

As a conclusion of data integration, a theory has been established to provide a deeper understanding of the purpose what organizations want to achieve by improving employees' well-being. As a new result from HR experts' view the 'Theory on the purpose of developing employee well-being' (Figure 5.) has been established. Organizations develop employee well-being strategies and HRM practices to ensure that employees have positive feelings that result in organizational outputs.

Results of conceptualization have led to the formulation of Thesis 7.

5. Figure. Creation of theory and meaning of employee well-being from the view of HR experts



Source: Own editing based on Williams, M., & Moser, T. (2019). The art of coding and thematic exploration in qualitative research. *International Management Review*, 15(1), 45-55.

Thesis 7 – New result

The overall research objective of identifying the meaning, the conceptualization and theory building of employee well-being has been accomplished. Research results led to the formulation of the following thesis and sub-theses.

Thesis 7. Applying the method of Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Charmaz, 2006), ‘The conceptual model of employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices’, the ‘Theory of the purpose of employee well-being development’ and the meaning of employee well-being by HR experts and employees of the examined samples have been developed.

Sub-thesis 7.1. The ‘Conceptual model of employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices’ has been developed (Figure 4.). The model identifies casual factors, contextual and intervening conditions that influence employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices. Due to the transformational process of the organizations through the well-being-oriented HRM practices and tools, employees’ feelings result in employee- and organizational-level expected outputs of the organizations.

Sub-thesis 7.2. According to the surveyed HR experts, employee well-being means positive feelings of employees. While according to the employees of the sample examined, employee well-being includes positive feelings, a living wage, work-life balance, a suitable work environment, physical and mental well-being, and a good workplace atmosphere.

Sub-thesis 7.3. The ‘Theory of the purpose of employee well-being development’ (Figure 5.) has been established. According to the theory, the examined organizations develop employee well-being strategies and human resource management practices to ensure that employees experience positive feelings, through which organizational outcomes might be achieved.

Related research questions: [RQ1.], [RQ1.1.], [RQ1.2.], [RQ1.3.], [RQ2.], [RQ3.],
[RQ3.1], [RQ3.2.], [RQ3.3.], [RQ3.4.], [RQ3.5.], [RQ4.],
[RQ4.1.], [RQ4.2.], [RQ4.3.], [RQ4.4.], [RQ4.5.], [RQ 4.6.]

Related research objective: [RO4.]

Related own publications: [P1], [P2], [P4], [P5], [P6], [P7], [P8]

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE APPLICATION OF RESULTS, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH PLANS

Research results promote the development of HRM processes and practices that might be incorporated into adult training programs at organizational and higher education levels. Research results might provide guidance for organizations and HR experts in targeted interventions and policies to promote employee well-being, ultimately leading to a more satisfied and productive workforce. For developing employee well-being strategy (Barakonyi, 1999; Kools & George, 2020; Nishii & Wright, 2007), ‘The conceptual model of employee well-being strategy and human resource management practices’ (Figure 4.), and the comprehensive toolbox of ‘Employee Well-being-Oriented Human Resource Management Practices’ (Table 2.), the meaning of employee well-being (Sub-thesis 7.2.) and the ‘Theory of the purpose of employee well-being development’ (Sub-thesis 7.3) might be utilized.

Limitation of the research derives from the exploratory mixed method, which has been intended to minimize with triangulation (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Hussain et al., 2013). The single case study with a limited number of employees also represents a limitation. Although research has been conducted on organizations employing several thousand employees, the limitation of the study is the sample size. This might restrict overall conclusions to be drawn. The collected data is not representative neither for economic organizations nor for the Hungarian labor market. However, results supplement the limited existing literature and research on HRM practices applied to enhance employees’ well-being in the Hungarian context. It might be seen as a limitation that results, such as benefits do not include magnitudes, however it was not the intention to collect reward related data, but the purpose was to map well-being strategies and practices.

Future empirical research is advisable to be conducted on larger samples involving organizational performance measures, adaptability of well-being strategies and practices to employee needs, perceptions, and utilization by employees. Further research testing on a larger sample would add value to the utilization of well-being indicators, which have been created based on the Workplace PERMA Profiler (Kern, 2016). Additional research is recommended applying the method of Grounded Theory regarding the conceptualization of employee well-being that might lead to improved constructive approaches in the theme.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The relevance of the research topic is supported by the challenging trends of human resources, the economic, technological, environmental social and labor market changes (Agarwal et al., 2019; FMLSA, 2017; Groysberg et al., 2018; Hesketh & Cooper, 2019; Millar et al., 2018; World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2025). Workplaces play a significant role in the development of employees' well-being (Agarwal et al., 2019; Eurofound, 2019; Rasulzada, 2007). Employee well-being is a defining element of workforce sustainability (Cantrell et al., 2023) at organizational, economic and social level (ENWHP, 2018; OECD, 2019; 2022). The promotion of employee well-being appears in organizations in the form of HRM practices. The comprehensive approach of the Ability – Motivation – Opportunity Theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Zhang et al., 2020) identifies practices that develop employee capabilities, motivate performance, and provide opportunities for development and participation. Therefore, it proved to be a sound theoretical basis for the research.

The theoretical and research background has suggested that the strategic approach of organizations to employee well-being is incomplete. Therefore, the research has been carried out with an exploratory sequential mixed research method, with an embedded case study (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The theory-building nature of Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Charmaz, 2006) facilitated the further conceptualization of employee well-being.

The innovative approach of the research is that it interprets employee well-being as a strategy and operationalizes the strategy by examining the toolbox. It examines the relationship between strategy and HRM practices (Kools & George, 2020) and employee perception. The creation of meaning and theory do not resolve the long-lasting academic debate on the phenomenon of employee-wellbeing, however, might add further aspects from the point of view of those who construct and apply it - the HR leaders and experts – and of those stakeholders who are ultimately the most affected, the employees.

The research findings might expand the existing knowledge by directing the focus to the strategic nature of well-being, to the consideration of employee perceptions regarding human resource management practices. The economic, technological, environmental, and social changes draw the attention to employees' bio-psycho-social well-being, as a cornerstone of workforce sustainability and competitiveness at current and future labor market. Therefore, besides the development of employee well-being, the novel approach of interpreting well-being as a strategy might also contribute to economic competitiveness.

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