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MASTER'S DISSERTATION (PROJECT)

“The investigation on employee wellbeing among 2017-2021 KAZGUU ISE alumni”

Program 7M04125 – “Human Resource Management”

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Abstract

Employee wellbeing is creating an environment, where people can work on full capacity with the help of support, engagement and through positive emotions.

This research aims to investigate KAZGUU ISE alumni wellbeing as an employee. It states that KAZGUU alumni are satisfied with work and experiences employee wellbeing. Workplace wellbeing increases employee engagement, decreases “sick leave”, and improves productivity (Westfield Health, 2021). In reality, does employee wellbeing forms employee engagement, decreases “sick leave” and increases productivity or it is a “trendy” phenomena after pandemic?

This paper mainly have used Gallup’s, Deloitte’s studies between 2017-2022 years on employee wellbeing. The relevant examples, figures and tables are introduced in the Literature review section. The practical section shares the result of 102 respondents and interview result of five participants.

Overall, the results showed that KAZGUU alumni are satisfied with their work and experiences employee wellbeing due to their financial wellbeing. Research have demonstrated that employee wellbeing develops employee brand, increase financial efficiency and improve employer reputation in the labor market.

Contents

- I. Introduction1
- II. Literature Review3
 - 2.1. The history of employee wellbeing.....3
 - 2.2. Corporate wellbeing programs. Gallup, PERMA and Deloitte studies.6
 - 2.2.2. PERMA – as a tool for psychological wellbeing8
 - 2.2.3. Deloitte prospective on employee wellbeing9
 - 2.3. Employee wellbeing as a strategic initiatives12
 - 2.4. Future implications of employee wellbeing15
- III. Methodology21
- IV. Data23
- V. Results.....23
- VI. Discussions and Limitations.....29
 - Limitations.....33
- VII. Conclusion34
- References:35
- Appendices40

List of tables

Table 1. Factors of the six dimensions of wellbeing.....10

Table 2. Survey results.....24

Table 3. Survey results.....25

Table 4. Survey results.....26

Table 5. Survey results.....27

Table 5. Survey results.....28

List of figures

Figure 1. Sample questions of MBI Survey.....5

Figure 2. The Communication Process6

Figure 3. Psychological wellbeing → Physical and Financial wellbeing.....9

Figure 4. Six – dimensions of wellbeing.....10

Figure 5. Levels (individual, organizational) of influence on wellbeing.....11

Figure 6. Limeade and Quantum survey results (2016).....13

Figure 7. Wellbeing increases workforce experience (survey result).....13

Figure 8. The influence and impact of wellbeing on three social levels.....15

Figure 9. Four possible scenarios of employee and employer relationships.....18

Figure 10. Exponential HR.....20

Figure 11. Kaizen quality circle.....31

Figure 12. The process model of change.....31

Figure 13. Communication plan.....32

I. Introduction

Cambridge dictionary (Cambridge Dictionary) explains wellbeing as a state of being and feeling healthy and happy, whereas Macmillan dictionary interpret it as someone's satisfactory state, where components are happiness, health, safety and money (Macmillan dictionary). Altogether, employee wellbeing is a physical and mental state of an employee. Workplace wellbeing increases employee engagement, decreases "sick leave", and improves productivity (Westfield Health, 2021). Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2020) conducted survey on employee health and wellness, according to it employees are about 40% more engaged at work if employer care about employees in terms of wellbeing and health. It is well known that engagement at work and productivity comes hand in hand, and that is important because productivity is the key element of any entity, since companies exists to generate benefit – profit according to Milton Friedman (Milton Friedman, 1970).

According to the survey that was conducted by Future Workplace in 2021 among 200 HR leaders, employee wellbeing is on the top list of five priorities for the future together with diversity, equality and inclusion, employee experience, agility, and digital HR. The pandemic boosted these phenomena and wellbeing became an essential necessity in work environment. Job seekers started to assume wellbeing programs as an essential part of any employer. After the pandemic, employee wellbeing can be assumed as trendy strategy to implement.

This research paper aims to investigate employee wellbeing notion and answers questions of what forms it as well as why this concept started to be widely known recently. M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University (KAZGUU) alumni between 2017 and 2021 were considered as sample in order to narrow down and focus research.

The hypothesis of the paper is that KAZGUU International School of Economics (ISE) alumni are satisfied with their job, and they have balance between work and life.

The literature review section will dive deeply into the employee wellbeing notion. It will describe and analyze the recent studies of Gallup, Deloitte on employee wellbeing. The PERMA and Deloitte's wellbeing dimensions are introduced. Furthermore, the section describes the future on wellbeing from Deloitte studies considering pandemic results.

Research objectives are:

- to investigate employee wellbeing notion
- to explore employee wellbeing dimensions
- to identify KAZGUU alumni wellbeing state as an employee
- to develop a wellbeing strategy implementation plan

The methodology section describes which methodology was used for this research and results section focuses on results of the survey and interview. Overall, there were 102 participants in the survey and 5 KAZGUU alumni were interviewed. At the end of the paper, the relevant conclusions are made, and the further steps are suggested.

The results of this paper are important not only to the KAZGUU University and other universities who would like to investigate their alumni wellbeing, but also to the people and companies who have their interest in employee wellbeing concept. It will provide the fundamental data and analyses of studies between 2017- 2022 years.

II. Literature Review

2.1. The history of employee wellbeing

The term employee wellbeing was formulated many years ago. Bernardino Ramazzini is a pioneering therapist that was concerned with workplace injury and tried to find the ways of minimizing negative effect on workers. (Rucker 2016) The Industrial Revolution have stimulated workplace injuries and it facilitated the development of employee wellness. Robert Owen (Welsh reformer) in 1810 introduced a ten-hour workday. Later on, in 1817 he decreased it to an eight-hour workday with the motto: "8 hours of work; 8 hours of recreation and 8 hours of sleep." Ford Motor Company is the first company that have supported Owen's idea of 8 hours. The roots of that idea can be traced down to today's working hour regimes. Organically, employee assistance programs, occupational safety and health and worksite health promotion developed and facilitated evolution of employee wellbeing, as we know today. It is important to note that government supported employers during development of above-mentioned programs (Rucker, 2016). As it can be seen, level of support is hierarchically top-down (Hayes, 2014).

According to the study of Harter, Keyes and Schmidt (2003), employee wellbeing is creating an environment, where people can work on full capacity with the help of support, engagement and through positive emotions. In this context, positive emotions are outcomes of fair, timely actions and behaviors from employer, managers and colleagues. If behaviors and actions at work cause negative emotions, it will lead to job burnout. If we identify the root causes of job burnout, we can experience positive working environment, which in turn will lead to wellbeing. Job burnout is a response of person to the stress at work (Lubbadeh, 2020). Prolonged job burnout will lead to health issues of employee and will be a reason for mental health issues. Mental health issues can be as following:

- Anxiety (social phobias, panic attacks, obsessive compulsive disorder)
- Behavioral an emotional disorders in children
- Bipolar affective disorder

- Depression
- Paranoia
- Eating disorders (Better Health Channel)

At first sight, these issues can be assumed because of tiredness; however, these mental illnesses have significant influence on employee's feelings, behaviors, and thoughts. Consequently, employee will reflect his/her state to work. Christina Maslach is a pioneering social psychologist who investigated the "job burnout" concept. With her team, they have developed Maslach burnout inventory (MBI) (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). MBI was the first method to evaluate the job burnout. Today the concept has been categorized into three versions: Human Services Survey, Educators Survey, General Survey. The Educators Survey is the evolved version of basic MBI. It consists of three major evaluating points such as:

- Emotional exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Personal Accomplishments

The main difference of the survey that it consists of twenty-two statements and the respondent have seven different options to select exact state. The Figure 1 shows the sample of MBI survey. The seven possible answers give opportunity to select the right option for the statement. Furthermore, according to Iwanicki and Schwab (1981), the validity of Education Survey is 0.90 for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishments 0.76 respectively.

Figure 1. Sample questions of MBI Survey.

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
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2. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
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3. I don't really care what happens to some patients.

Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
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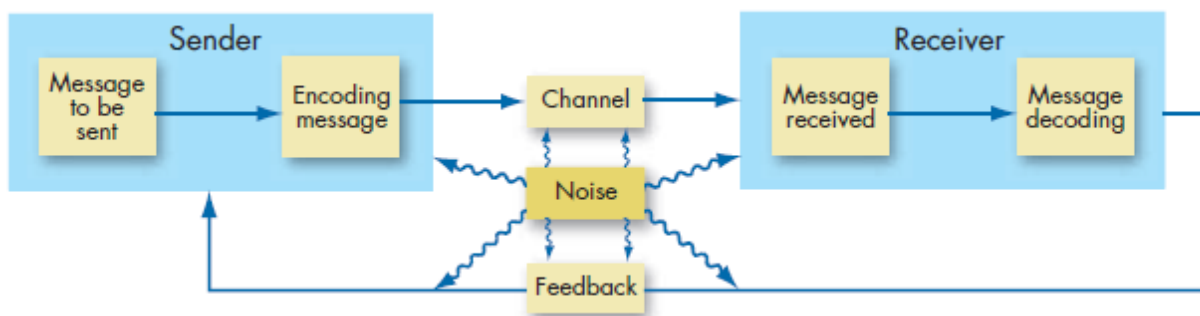
Source: Mind Garden (2021)

Next, several reasons that causes job burnout will be discussed. First, high workload (Maslach et al., 2001): employees could not manage their time; as a result, the quality of work will decrease. Employee could try to keep the quality of work on the same level. However, personally, mentally employee will suffer. Second, role conflict (Maslach et al., 2001): sometimes employer does not provide employee with job description and duties. Employer and employee will work on different directions. Obviously, there are two main reasons for this phenomenon:

1. Job description. Job description should be created before starting the selection process of employee and introducing performance management metrics. Job description consists of three objects known as acronym KSA, where K-knowledge, S-skills, A-abilities (Aguinis, 2019). If employee is lacking one of KSA components, he/she will experience job conflict. It is better to prepare employee beforehand via training and development or during the onboarding stage.

2. Communication process. There can be the situation when the employer explained everything to the employee, but the employee perceived the information distorted. The reason for this is the “noise” in the communication process (Robbins and Judge, 2017). Noise occurs due to semantic issues, high information capacity, language and cultural differences. The Figure 2 shows the full cycle of communication process. As it can be seen, it is better to repeat or explain again, so that at the end no one will suffer from communication noise.

Figure 2. The Communication Process



Source: Organization Behaviour (Robbins and Judge, 2017)

The third cause for the job burnout is social support. Employee wants constantly receive support and feedback from manager and coworkers (Maslach et al., 2001). The main causes of the job burnout are not complex but requires constant assessment from external perspective to see pattern and identify the reason of failure of employees. It is better to identify the issue beforehand to diminish the expenses on employee wellness. As Milton Friedman said: “*the social responsibility of the firm is to maximize profit*” (Milton Friedman, 1970).

1.2. Corporate wellbeing programs. Gallup, PERMA and Deloitte studies.

Corporate wellbeing programs are aimed at creating a set of measures for the level of employee satisfaction. Why would a company spend its resources on the wellbeing of employees, does it make sense? A Gallup study found that 48% of millennial employees leave a company due to burnout and fatigue. Employers are interested in retaining valuable personnel, so they are ready to use all resources to ensure the quality of life of their employees. The

concept of wellbeing became popular with the help of two Gallup researchers, James Harter and Tom Rath, “Everything is fine. The Five Elements of Growth”, based on a 50-year study of adults in 150 countries. As a result of this study, it was found that employee wellbeing consists of 5 main elements:

1. Career – employee motivated to reach goals and understand that each day contribute something. It can be enhanced by drawing up mandatory career development plans, free professional training, stimulating the exchange of experience and knowledge, holding meet ups, inviting interesting speakers to offices to give lectures and master classes, subscription libraries for electronic, corporate discounts for training in online schools.
2. Social – employee builds relationship and surrounded by love. Social connections and public relations are two elements of wellbeing that many companies put together under the heading of “community” or “social connections”. These elements are aimed at involving employees in social activities, the purpose of which is to take care of the world around us and help those in needs. It is becoming increasingly important for people to make a positive contribution to the development of life of the society. Thus, the employer can help meet the need of employees to be socially responsible, and at the same time strengthen the internal connections of employees with colleagues. For example, at the tobacco company JTI, employees actively take part in a charity run, all proceeds from which go to support people with disabilities. Some companies have a practice of organizing events as garbage collection days and a donor day. Such external projects can be considered as part of Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSI).
3. Financial – employee can fulfill needs, economically stable. Webinars and master classes from invited financial literacy experts, additional training on investing and budgeting. In the US and European countries, employers have begun to practice option programs that involve the issuance of shares, company securities to employees as a motivation or bonus so that they can become full co-owners of the business and entrepreneurs. For example, Airbnb’s

head of marketing received more than \$10 million in stock options in ten years, and BlaBlaCar's 717 employees became shareholders in 2021.

4. Community – employee is comfortable in the environment of living (working). This can be enhanced by practicing values of the company, which could be developed together with employees via Code of Conduct. Ritz-Carlton's motto is "Ladies and gentlemen that serves ladies and gentlemen". This citation illustrates the culture of well-trained staff, client service, respect and honor as for stayers and guests, and toward coworkers.
5. Physical – employee has the energy to live (healthy). Gym and yoga sessions in the office, discounts on gym memberships, reimbursement for sports entitlements, team sports events, healthy eating in the office. For example, Google, without spending extra budgets, simply changed the approach to placing drinks and food in the office. The company moved sodas and junk food hard to reach areas of the office; instead, they have placed water, fruits, salads and vegetables in the popular recreation areas of the office. Summing up the results of the experiment, approximately 2,300 Google employees began to choose a salad for breakfast (HBR, 2016). American companies like Cisco, Zappos and Ben & Jerry's care about employee's sleep and energy level. They put comfortable sleeping capsules in their offices where employees can sleep during their lunch break (Deloitte, 2021).

2.2.2. PERMA – as a tool for psychological wellbeing

However, in 2012 Dr. Martin Seligman, a psychologist, have developed different five elements of psychological wellbeing – PERMA. PERMA stands for:

P – Positive Emotions – as name itself positivity, good impressions

E – Engagement – involvement in what you do everyday

R – Relationships – relationships with surrounding and others

M – Meaning – the purpose and richness of existence

A – Accomplishments – achievements (Seligman, 2012).

How to apply the PERMA model in the workplace and come up with the ideal formula for anyone who is going to embody the culture of wellbeing in a company or organization? The same question was asked by the consultants of Bailey and French, pioneers in the field of HR (positive psychology). They correlated each element of the model with employee value and added two more components - Physical and Financial wellbeing.

Figure 3. Psychological wellbeing → Physical and Financial wellbeing



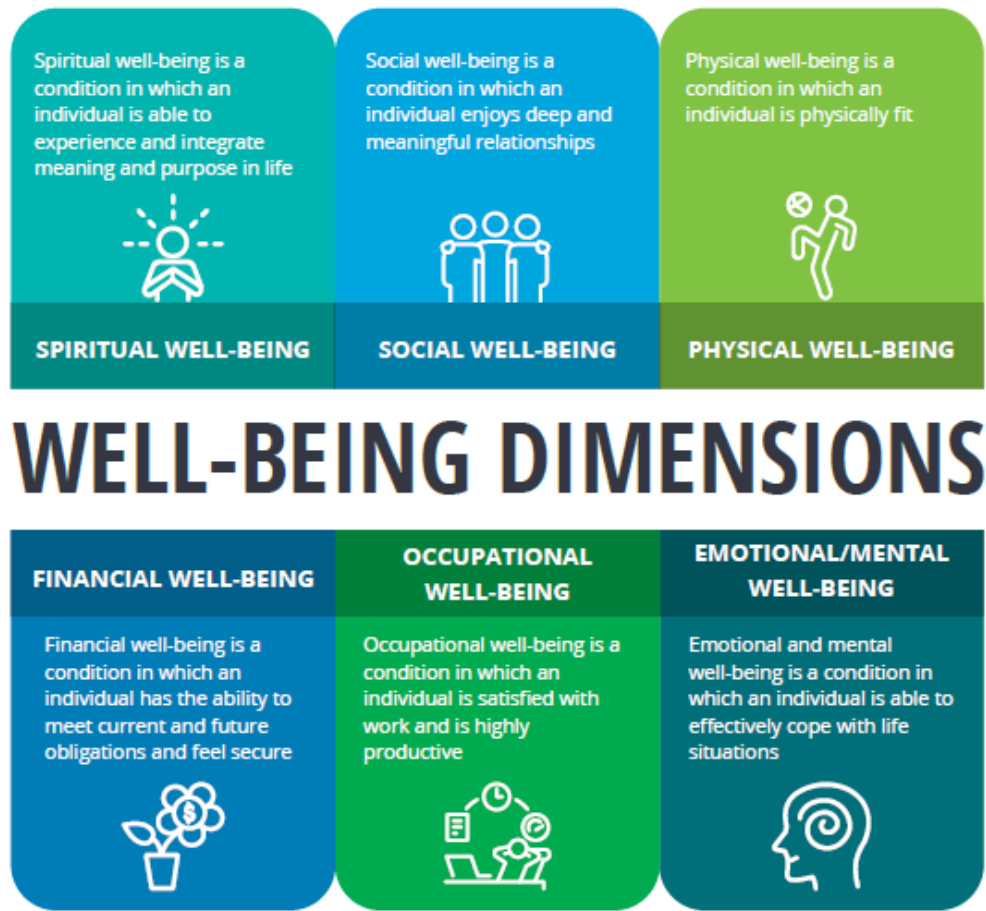
Source: Bailey and French (2021)

As it can be seen, Bailey and French (2021) reveal that PERMA model covers only psychological wellbeing of employees. Consequently, it is better to assume psychological wellbeing as core component of wellbeing, in addition physical and financial wellbeing are outcomes of it. Furthermore, it can go other way round as physical and financial wellbeing elevates psychological wellbeing.

2.2.3. Deloitte prospective on employee wellbeing

A recent report of Deloitte (2021) – Wellbeing at the heart of the employee experience introduces six elements of wellbeing. These six elements (refer to Figure 4.) are seems to be improved versions of Gallup’s five elements, PERMA wellbeing dimensions.

Figure 4. Six – dimensions of wellbeing.



Source: Deloitte Report (2021). Wellbeing at the heart of the employee experience.

All elements of wellbeing are the same as Gallup researchers have suggested only the spiritual wellbeing was added to the list. This dimension is person’s balance and harmony of his/her purpose in life in reality. Table 1 illustrates factors of these six dimensions.

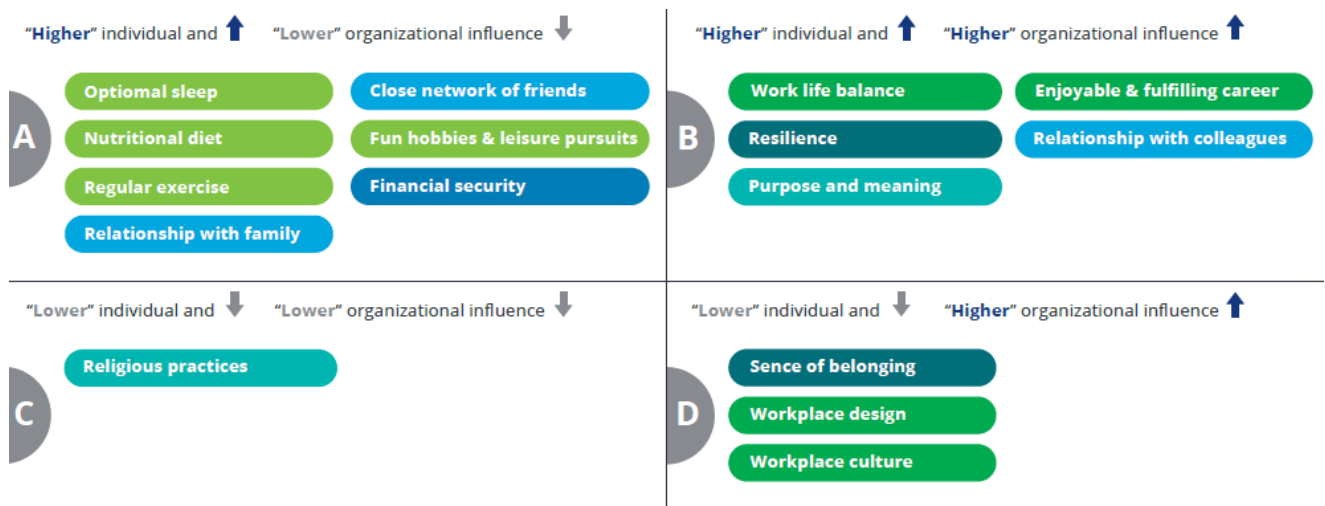
Table 1. Factors of the six dimensions of wellbeing.

Physical	Social	Occupational	Emotional/ Mental	Financial	Spiritual
Optimal sleep	Relationship with family	Work life balance	Sence of belonging	Financial security	Purpose and meaning

Nutritional diet	Close network of friends	Enjoyable & fulfilling career	Resilience		
Regular exercise	Relationship with colleagues	Workplace design			
Fun hobbies & leisure pursuits		Workplace culture			

Depending on the level of influence, these factors can be classified on individual and organizational. The Figure 5 reveals four different levels of influence of individual (high, low) and organization (high, low).

Figure 5. Levels (individual, organizational) of influence on wellbeing.



Source: Deloitte Report (2021). Wellbeing at the heart of the employee experience.

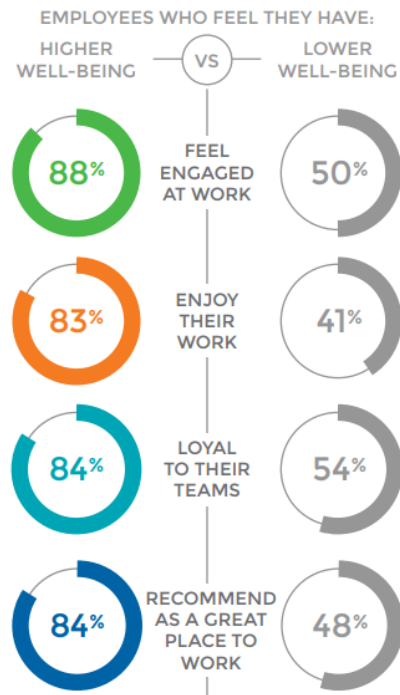
“Higher” individual, “higher” organizational influence (B) and “lower” individual, “higher” organizational influence (D) are sections that the entity has the power on and ability to change. The most challenging side while implementing the wellbeing programs is to have influence on

individual level, where “individual” is high and “lower” organizational influence. Still organization should try to implement strategies on individual level too. The Google, Inc. can be a good example of successful wellbeing initiative at “higher” individual and “lower” organizational level (HBR, 2016). In 2016, Google observed that most employees prefer to grab a snack from a snack bar that was close to the place the employee is working. They have calculated that in one year these snacks forms one pound of fat. Google decided to popularize healthy food and eating habits of employees. In one of the popular café at the office, Google have placed bright campaigns near the vegetables, which illustrated the information and benefits of the food. At the end of the experiment, Googlers preferred to eat healthy and the number of people who have tried healthy food increased by 74% (HBR, 2016). Healthy eating habits constitutes health and wellbeing of the employee. In the 2000s Johnson and Johnson invested on employee wellbeing (wellness) and reported a 170% return on investment (HBR, 2016).

1.3. Employee wellbeing as a strategic initiatives

In 2020, Deloitte conducted global survey on Human Capital and 80 % of respondents answered as very important/important strategic priority for their organization. Limeade and Quantum made a survey among 1276 US employees in 2016. According to the results, employees who had/felt higher wellbeing had more than 80 per cent of job engagement, job satisfaction, loyalty to work and team and had recommended their workplace to others. (Refer to Figure 6.)

Figure 6. Limeade and Quantum survey results (2016)

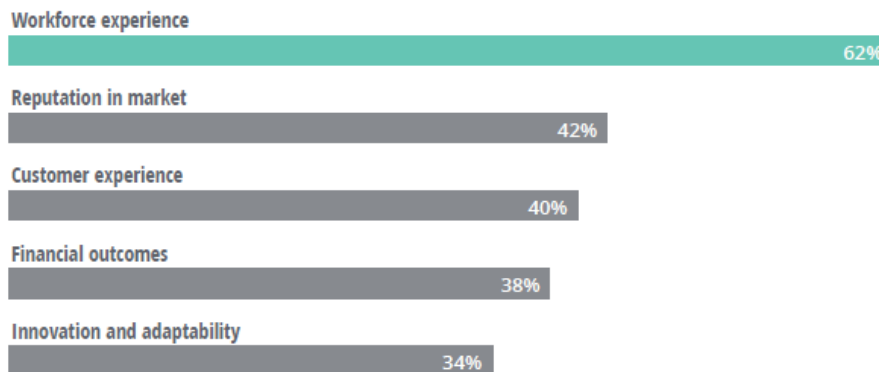


From this survey, we can exhibit the positive impact of wellbeing to the overall employee’s state. Satisfied, engaged employees delivers great results to the company and influences on the company’s branding. On this occasion, the Deloitte survey (2020) has similar results as Limeade and Quantum. (Refer to Figure 7.)

Figure 7. Wellbeing increases workforce experience (survey result)

Well-being drives improvements in workforce experience more often than any other business outcome

Which of the following are most (positively) impacted by your well-being strategy? Select all that apply.



Source: Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey, 2020.

Wellbeing and workforce experience and reputation of the company, financial results of the company and customer experience are directly correlated. Furthermore, among 9000 respondents, the ones that have wellbeing initiatives in the organization described that their wellbeing strategy has focus on physical, mental, and financial state of employees supporting PERMA, Gallup's and Deloitte's dimensions of wellbeing. The Appendix 1 demonstrates respondent's answers.

Since 2018 Mayo Clinic (#1 USA's nation clinic) started to investigate wellbeing among medical workers. They have developed wellbeing index that measures work and personal life balance, burnout, stress and other factors that influences wellbeing. A recent report for 2021 illustrates wellbeing indexes for physician, nurse, resident, medical student, APP, employee and pharmacy wellbeing. The Appendix 2 shows results of survey among 64 874 employees conducted in 2021.

- More than a half of respondents felt burnout in the past month
- Almost 57 percent of respondents faced with emotional issues
- Nearly 80 percent of respondents had a work-life balance

These results shows that employers have to manage job burnout and emotional balance of employee. Gallup (2019) and Deloitte (2021) suggests that wellbeing should be considered holistically with other HR practices like performance, employee experience management etc. The pandemic was a clear example of personnel importance to any entities productivity and even the life of company depends on workers (Deloitte, 2021). Happy and positive employees boost productivity and focus on what is good for the entity. Company itself is a social institute; healthy employees will create healthy community. After some period, this community can develop other individuals. This two-way communication can be created, if the company will establish the wellbeing as a strategic priority (Deloitte, 2021). The Figure 8 illustrates the influence and impact of wellbeing on three different levels: individual, organization, society.

Figure 8. The influence and impact of wellbeing on three social levels.



Source: Deloitte Report (2021). Wellbeing at the heart of the employee experience.

Organizations have to create a social entity that should balance employee and employers expectations and needs. The balance is the relationship itself.

1.4. Future implications of employee wellbeing

Coming back to Deloitte report in 2018, they have mentioned the term “social enterprise” and gave the definition as: *“A social enterprise is an organization whose mission combines revenue growth and profitmaking with the need to respect and support its environment and stakeholder network. This includes listening to, investing in, and actively managing the trends that are shaping today’s world. It is an organization that shoulders its responsibility to be a good citizen (both inside and outside the organization), serving as a role model for its peers and promoting a high degree of collaboration at every level of the organization.”* The definition clarifies the need of wellbeing in terms of profitability, transparent relationship between workforce, stakeholders and others. Wellbeing builds a social enterprise. The process is long term and challenging, which requires investments and time. The wellbeing initiatives can be communicated top – down or vice versa. For example, United Arab Emirates wellbeing was

popularized at the national level (National Program for Happiness & Wellbeing, 2019). UAE would like to be the world's best Human Development Index. UAE have created a Council that acts as an ambassador of wellbeing and delivers support for all organization and companies in the country. In 2019, Alpin (Integrated solutions for the building environment) company was the winner of wellbeing initiatives (Alpin Healthy, 2022). Alpin Healthy is an initiative to foster wellness and healthy lifestyle at home, work. Company focuses on six facets:

- Healthy eating habits
- At the office, company provides workers with healthy snacks, variety of fruits and vegetables including green tea.
- Reusable water bottles
- Company focuses on external environmental wellbeing too. Water coolers in Alpin are BPA free, which indicates that the bottles can be reused.
- Safe and healthy working conditions
- Alpin educates and trains its employees on first aid, healthy eating habits, occupational safety, getting rid of unhealthy habits as smoking etc. In addition, the company constantly looks after their sanitary norms, they organize on time cleaning and creates plan to maintain safe working place.
- Sports and recreation
- Alpin constantly organizes sport activities for employees. Sport activities and participation on competitions, -thons builds and creates strong team by enhancing team cohesion and helps to support physical health of workforce.
- LEED certified building
- LEED is a certification that shows the building focuses on environmental sustainability. It means that Alpin office is green friendly, has the balance between CO2 and O2 emissions. As a result, Alpin has a healthy workplace for employees. Furthermore, Alpin is a first company in Middle East to get the LEED Gold certification.

- Vitality (Alpin Healthy, 2022)
- Alpin constantly monitors the air quality. According to ASHRAE standards, Alpin's air quality is 30 percent higher than the norm. Moreover, company tries to use only natural lightening by viewing offices to the outside. In terms of comfort, Alpin offices are equipped with manageable chairs, tables and monitors.

As it can be seen, from Alpin example the wellbeing of employee starts from working facilities, grows to healthy eating, living habits and continues with care to the worlds' ecosystem sustainability. One initiative to build workforce wellbeing created the Social Welfare as we have illustrated in the Figure 9.

The Deloitte analyses over years showed the importance of employees, creating a social enterprise is a primary priority for any organization, which wants to create sustainable, profit generating entity. However, a recent report (2021) of the Deloitte showed that being a social enterprise is not enough, we have forgot about employee's expectations and trends in the workforce. Mainly, the pandemic is the reason of employee's behavioral change. Many organizations with the help of employees delivered great results, stayed in the market despite economic downturn. It seems that with the power, help of organization and employees companies survived, however a recent study of Harvard Business Review (2021) demonstrates other results. One thousand and five hundred respondents among 46 countries participated in the survey that was created basing on MBI and Areas of Work life survey (AWS). About 1397 employees said that their work life changed to the worse; 1334 employees agree that their wellbeing decreased. As it can be seen, despite big changes in the employer's ability and strategies to enhance employee wellbeing it does not work. Due to the pandemic employers and employees, relationship and expectations have changed dramatically. Only the time can show does the change direction is positive or negative. In-depth analysis by Deloitte (2021) demonstrates four possible scenarios of relationship between employers and employees. The Figure 9 illustrates relationship's scenarios.

Figure 9. Four possible scenarios of employee and employer relationships.



Source: Deloitte (2021)

The four scenarios were considered in the context of government impact and talent supply. Government can influence to the organization and employees through strategies and legal regulations. Even the organization could not stand apart from rules of the country it operates. Talents matters most. If the labor market will be saturated on certain profession, the employees will prefer to stay in the company it works for because he/she can be replaced by other one and vice versa. In this term, it is right to consider future trends in this context.

1. Work as fashion. Deloitte compares work with fashion. There are seasons in the fashion industry that changes fast. The same applies there. Low government impact and low talent creates an attitude on employers to compare themselves with others and react to changes that became trendy. Employees behaves in the same way: they look for the benefits and attractiveness of the potential employer and if they satisfy the requirements of low talent, he/she will change the workplace. At this situation, only employer suffer from “switching cost”. However, the employer that assume the market as “work as fashion” does not think about creating work force capacity, strategy. They assume that workers are needed today or now.

2. War between talents. This is the case when the market is highly saturated with talents. Employers does not think about their employee and would not try to create working conditions because he/she can be replaced easily.
3. Work is work. Employees work because they have personal benefit from the organization. In this case, the government supports employee prospective and tries to satisfy needs.
4. Purpose unleashed. The Howard Schultz describes this case better by saying, “*When you are surrounded by people who share a passionate commitment around a common purpose, anything is possible.*” This is the organization, where employee shares values, purpose together with employer. Employees are heard, and organization implements strategies to foster unity.

These future trends are possible, and some organizations are experiencing it already. Analyzing all trends in employee wellbeing, there was not any moment of HRs and Human Capital Department. There is possibility that most organizations manage the wellbeing by themselves. It might be that department managers are taking care of employees with available resources without knowledge, skills, and abilities of managing employee wellbeing. The results of human capital trend 2020 by Deloitte demonstrates that 55 percent of respondents believes that HR department and the role of HR should grow to be able to response the worlds changes. Eighty-five percent of respondents believes that HRM will not receive support from stakeholders and their power of influence will be limited. This report introduces the concept “exponential HR”. This report introduces the concept “exponential HR”. The Figure 10 shows area of focus and scope of influence of HR.

Figure 10. Exponential HR.



Source: Deloitte report (2020) on Human Capital Trend.

There is clear correlation between influence of HR and wellbeing of employees. HRM acts as a facilitator of change. There are lot of methodologies of organizational change; the famous is combination of process model and Kurt Lewin's change model. If the organization decides to focus on employee wellbeing, the change can be implemented basing on this model of changes (Refer to Appendix 2 and 3 for change models). The interview results of respondents supported the idea of exponential HR.

III. Methodology

Quantitative research methods are used in this work. This method tests population or sample on investigating question, in this case in questionnaire form. Career center provided the access to the Power BI, where the telephone number of alumni could be retrieved. The survey was distributed among 774 ISE alumni from 2017 to 2021 years via WhatsApp mobile application. Unfortunately, some of alumni have changed their telephone number and were not reached. Due to this reason as representatives of full population (alumni) sampling was used. The Slovin formulae was used to identify the sampling number. When survey reached this number, it was paused for collecting responses. The number of participants was tracked manually.

The Slovin formulae is: $n = \frac{N}{1+Na^2}$, where n is sample size, N is population size (774 alumni, alpha is error tolerance percentage. Error tolerance percentage is 5%.

$$N = 774$$

$$a = 5\% = 0.05$$

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Na^2} = \frac{774}{1 + 774(0.05)^2} = \frac{774}{1 + 774(0.0025)} = \frac{774}{3} = 228$$

The sampling size is 228 alumni.

The quantitative (questionnaire) research method has its strengths and limitations.

Strengths

The sample represents the whole population (in this case alumni), and results can be generalized.

Interview method and questions can be repeated to test the reliability and another researcher can use the same question if it is applicable to the research scope.

Data is precise and it gives an opportunity to make solid conclusion.

The survey is distributed, and data is collected. The cost of collecting data is low.

The limitations of quantitative research method:

Data is limited depending on the scope of questions.

Data can be invalid, if the respondent was not from targeted audience (this research is focused only on KAZGUU alumni)

Complex concepts cannot be explained because data is limited on research scope.

Size of participants. The more participants in the survey, the most difficult to analyze and combine results.

The survey questions were started from easiest to pay attention from respondents and to familiarize with survey logic. Furthermore, it is beneficial to test survey among small group before sending it to the selected population. Pilot group can test the interface, logic, the right order of the questions. Researcher will be sure that collected data will make significant contribution to the research results.

To assess the wellbeing of alumni from practical perspective, there were online interviews of 5 people in average 20-25 minutes long via online WhatsApp video call. These people were volunteers who responded to the announcement that was published together with survey link that indicated the research topic and purpose. Details of the interview can be found in the Results section.

IV. Data

Overall, 102 respondents participated in the interview, among 774 alumni, the survey was sent to 342 alumni, the reason for this is that some of alumni have changed their phone number or the data stored in the university database is invalid. The response rate is 29.8 %. The sampling size have changed from 228 alumni to 102 alumni (Refer to Appendix 4 for the survey questions and Appendix 5 for the interview questions).

V. Results

Males (49%) and females (51%) are almost equally participated in the survey. The most actively participated 2019 and 2021 graduates 30.4% and 23.5% respectively. In terms of specialty:

- 35,3% Finance
- 22.5% Economics
- 21.6% Management
- 20.6% Accounting and auditing

Eighty-four respondents are employed and works full time. This population will illustrate the employee wellbeing of alumni. 27.5% of respondents has 240.000-300.000KZT of the monthly income; almost 18% has 300.000-360.000KZT. Average income of Kazakhstani worker is 250.000KZT (KAZINFORM, 2022). The results shows that most KAZGUU alumni have average and above average of monthly income.

- Mental health

Only 30.4% has a very good

52.9% has good

14.7% neither good, nor poor. At the end, almost 84% of respondents has good mental health and no one has very poor.

- Physical health

Physically, about 80% alumni has a good state.

- Occupational

48 of respondent always feel full of energy at work and 56 respondents are enthusiastic at their job. However, 67.6% of alumni feel exhausted at work. The reason for this might be high working load. However, 72.5% of respondents answered that the workload is about right. In addition, 60.8% of respondent answered that they have enough time to do their work on allocated hours. The reason for employee tiredness is not high workload and time limits.

- Communication

Alumni have a good communication with their managers and managers shows support for their subordinates.

66.7% of respondents says that they can communicate with their supervisor on issues like mental health and they can give advice if they need so.

68.6% of respondents said that their managers support them if they have issues.

Table 2. Survey results

#	Question	Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor
1	In general, how would you describe your mental health at the moment?	30.4% - 31	52.9% - 54	14.7% - 15	2% - 2	0
2	In general, how would you	25.5% - 26	52% - 53	20.6% - 21	2% - 2	0

	describe your physical health at the moment?					
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

This section focused on discovering mental and physical state of the alumni. As it can be seen, individuals are able to solve their daily situations such as conflicts, anxiety etc. The results demonstrate that almost 83% of employee can cope with job burnout at work because they are stress resistant (Lubbadeh, 2020). Furthermore, they are not exposed to mental health issues like anxiety, behavioral, emotional disorder, depression and eating disorders (Better Health Channel).

Physically, alumni enhances their state by themselves because the majority of respondents wrote that they do not have wellness programs. They try to do sport at least 2 times a week, by answering: sport helps to maintain stress resistance, help to manage thoughts, and calms their “*brain activity*”. Most alumni does not have facilities like Cisco, Zappos and Google has like sleeping capsules, healthy eating habits (HBR. 2016). Alumni does not wait such initiatives from employer, because according to Deloitte Report (2021) Wellbeing at the heart of the employee experience, Figure 6, physical activities are located where “individual” is high and at “low” organizational level. Nevertheless, organization can intervene this and support their employees by buying wellness subscription or placing inventories to develop physical state of employees.

Table 3. Survey results

#	Question	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	At my work I feel full of energy	47.1% - 48	52% - 53	1% -1

2	At my work I feel enthusiastic about my job	54.9% - 56	44.1% - 45	1% - 1
3	At my work I feel exhausted	67.6% - 69	11.8% - 12	20.6% - 21
4	At my work I feel under excessive pressure	13.7% - 14	42.2% - 43	44.1% - 45

This section focuses on exploring employee engagement. PERMA model was used as a foundation for survey questions. (Seligman, 2012). As research have mentioned before PERMA model illustrates psychological wellbeing together with Physical and Financial (Bailey and French, 2021). Alumni feel full of energy and enthusiastic at work. Despite this fact, they feel exhausted. Moreover, sometimes they feel excessive pressure.

Table 4. Survey results

#	Question	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
1	My organisation encourages staff to talk openly about mental health problems	56.9% - 58	31.4% - 32	11.8% - 12
2	My organisation is supportive of people's mental health	57.8% - 59	30.4% - 31	11.8% - 12
3	I usually have enough time to get my work	60.8% - 62	32.4% - 33	6.9% - 7

	done within my allocated hours			
4	My immediate supervisor, line manager or boss is supportive if I have a problem	68.6% - 70	27.5% - 28	3.9% - 4
5	My immediate supervisor, line manager or boss is open and approachable on issues like mental health	66.7% - 68	26.5% - 27	6.9% - 7

This section focuses on social and community wellbeing and partly emotional wellbeing state. More than a half respondent can talk openly about their issues. Thirty-two respondent selected neutral point and 12 people does not have culture of openness. There are clear correlation between openness and support at the organization because the same number of respondents answered that their workplace support their mental health. Most employees does not work overtime, only 6.9% of all sample has high working load. Alumni's supervisors or managers are supportive and open on issues. It might be that managers are wellbeing initiators not the company itself because the percentage ration between organizations and managers prospective are same.

Table 5. Survey results

#	Question	Too much	About right	Too little
1	In a normal week, the workload in your job...	26.5% - 27	72.5% - 74	1% -1

However, concerning the question workload 72.5% of respondents have about right duties and responsibilities. Previously, 60.8% respondents answered that they can perform their

job on allocated hours. In conclusion, almost 67% alumni have normal workload and they can perform without overtime work.

Table 6. Survey results

#	Question	Yes	No
1	In the last three months, have you ever worked in your main job despite not feeling well enough to perform your duties	64.7% - 66	35.3% - 36

Roughly, 65% of alumni keep working despite not feeling well. Furthermore, the majority of respondents tries to balance their work and life. They have written that strong time-management and sport helps to minimize stress level. Some of respondents said they are on the way to manage their life. Others suggest having a goal in life and separate personal life and working life. In addition, one respondent wrote that their company buys subscription at ifeel, it is a platform where you can find your therapist who will work with you.

Overall, the survey gave positive results on wellbeing of alumni, however only 4 out of 102 employees has wellbeing initiatives at their company.

The interview results demonstrated the same result that companies do not have wellbeing strategies. HR or department manager acts as a wellbeing supporter. If people have issues, they immediately contact HR or Manager.

All five respondents work in the company of 20-25 people, where hybrid format of work is permitted. Anuar, N., Tanat do not have HR at the company, their colleagues have this role additional to their primary job. Darya and A. have an HR (she/he has this role additional to the recruiting, office work).

VI. Discussions and Limitations

The hypothesis of the research was confirmed that KAZGUU 2017-2021 alumni have the employee wellbeing experience. This research assumed that wellbeing initiative would develop alumni wellbeing. However, there are no wellbeing strategy and initiatives implemented in responders organizations. Managers, employees support their colleagues with available resource. Despite this fact, alumni are satisfied and have the work-life balance. The conclusion is that KAZGUU alumni does not require wellbeing initiatives because they can follow it without external support. However, several respondents wrote that they are constantly being disturb by work on non-working times. The future trend of employee wellbeing can be described as Deloitte (2021) report “work is work”, where government has the impact over labor market and talent supply is low. Interview results show another prospective on this occasion. Anuar, Tanat, N., A., and Darya are working in social enterprise (Deloitte, 2020) and their future trend can be described as “purpose unleashed” because the value and purpose that they have is the same as the organization has. All five respondents are happy to work in the organization and recommend it as an employer, according to Limeade and Quantum (2016). They feel engaged at work, enjoy it, are loyal to the colleagues (team) and recommend their employers as a company to work for.

In addition, respondents mentioned several point that contributes to the wellbeing:

- 13th salary. Some companies offer additional yearly salary as a bonus to the monthly salary.
- Company can present laptops, headphones, Yandex stations and other valuable gifts for great results or achievements.
- Employee can take one day of day-off in the month, which is payable.
- Ordinary flat is the office of one employer. Workers wear slippers, have calm and comfortable atmosphere to work.

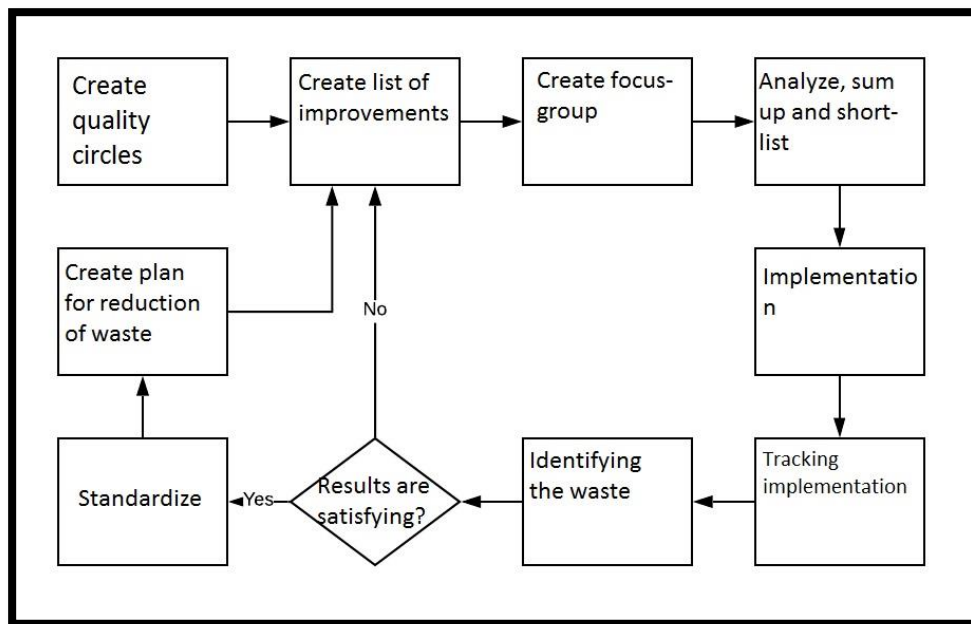
- Library. Company buys popular books, articles every month. They have a repository of various literature.
- Informal meetings where employers share their findings or if they want to raise a topic for the discussion.
- These are the examples that interviewees experience in their current company. It seems that companies with 20-25 employees have their own informal wellbeing programs. This can be considered as a further research topic.

The survey showed that alumni wellbeing state is good and it does not correlate with wellbeing initiatives in the company. This research delivers several assumptions:

- Financial state of KAZGUU alumni the same and higher in comparison to the average Kazakhstani salary (250.000KZT (KAZINFORM, 2022)). It might be that alumni support their state by themselves without looking to their employer. They can buy gym subscription, visit a therapist or psychologist and participate in mental health courses and trainings. Furthermore, the Labor Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Government of RK, 2022) does not require organizations to develop wellbeing strategies. Yet there are norms of working hours, labor unions, leisure time etc. However, the survey showed that employer and employee work in a relationship “work is work” (Deloitte, 2021). Krekel et al. (2019) in 2019 conducted research and evidenced a direct relationship between financial wellbeing and employee wellbeing. This is the main reason why KAZGUU alumni are satisfied with their current job and have employee wellbeing.
- Companies do have employee wellbeing initiatives, but they have not been popularized yet. According to Limmeade (2021), wellbeing is a continuous process, which needs intention to enhance wellbeing for the long period (throughout life). Since employee wellbeing is a continuous process, the Kaizen approach can be used by organization to implement the initiative.

Kaizen is a process of continuous improvement, which aims to remove waste, imbalance and overload (Suzuki, 2016). Usually, Kaizen consists of several quality circles to improve the previous stage and move towards the goal. Figure 11 illustrates the process of Kaizen improvement.

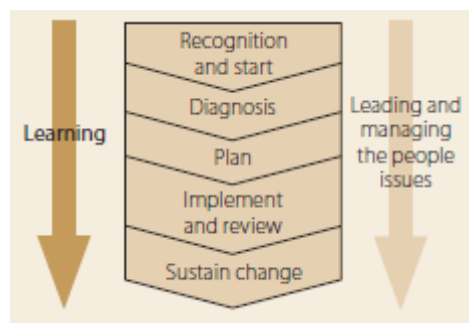
Figure 11. Kaizen quality circle.



Source: Adiya Arsakay (2022).

When company decides to implement a wellbeing strategy it is a change. The process model of change suits in this occasion. Figure 12 illustrates it.

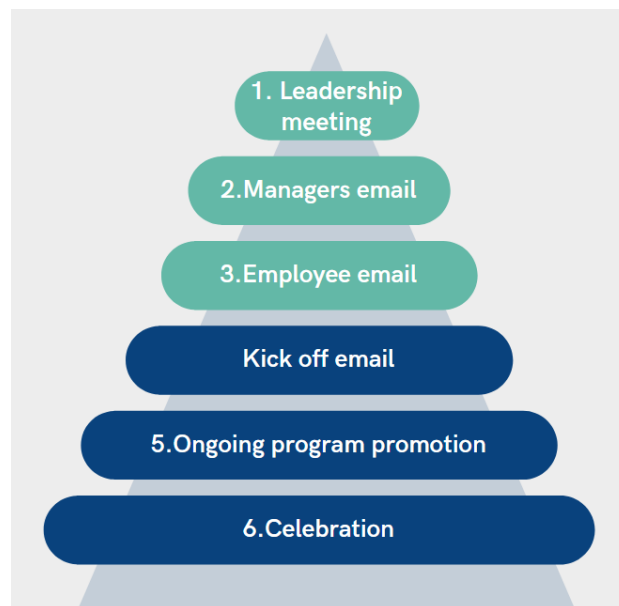
Figure 12. The process model of change



Source: The Theory and Practice of change management (Hayes, 2014)

The change will consist from five stages: Recognition and start → Diagnosis → Plan → Implement and review → Sustain change. While performing this process organization and people will learn the new process and pattern. Furthermore, people will show resistance to change and company should widely manage people issues. People issues can be managed by implementing communication plan (Aguinis, 2019). Figure 13 illustrates the basic example of communication plan.

Figure 13. Communication plan



Source: Aguinis, 2019.

Employee wellbeing implementation will consist from these steps. Kaizen as methodology of continuous improvement, process model of change to implement the change and communication plan to manage people issues and communicate the vision of the change.

Furthermore, the employee wellbeing can measured as Return on Investment (ROI) but called as Wellbeing Return on Investment (WROI) (Deloitte Insights, 2019). The methodology was developed as part of the investigation in Canada. The evaluation metric consist of Short-term disability (STD), Long-term disability (LTD), Employee & Family Assistance Program.

The formulae is:

$$WROI(\%) = (R - 1) * 100$$

$$R = \frac{C + D + E}{A + B}$$

A – Incremental costs

B – Increase in benefit cost

C – STD savings

D – LTD savings

E – Extrapolated (depending on disability savings) (Refer to Appendix 6 for detailed calculation methodology)

Consequently, employee wellbeing initiatives develop:

- Employee brand
- Increase financial efficiency of the organization
- Improve reputation in labor market

Limitations

Funding was one of the limitation factors. Due to that only ISE alumni were covered, rather than whole university alumni from 2017-2021. The results of much broader research will be more beneficial for branding and for the analysis of alumni state.

If the personal data of alumni was not outdated, it might be that the results of the research will be more precise, and the sample size would be 223 alumni.

VII. Conclusion

This research has discussed the employee wellbeing dimensions, analyzed recent studies, and investigated the KAZGUU ISE alumni employee wellbeing. Overall, the research supported the thesis statement that KAZGUU alumni are experiencing employee wellbeing. However, the research showed that KAZGUU alumni do not need employee wellbeing strategies because they personally manage their work and life balance. The majority of companies in Kazakhstan operates at the “work for work” future state. Organizations with 20-25 employees focuses on “purpose unleashed” future state. This controversial question has to be investigated separately.

As a recommendation for further research would be to deepen the analysis and take into consideration not only ISE alumni but to consider whole university alumni from 2017-2021 years. In addition, it will be better to analyze another university in Kazakhstan and to make a comparative analysis. Employee wellbeing could not be easily managed, the size of the company, the management style, the role of HR department are primary factors that influences. These factors can be investigated from the lens of employee wellbeing. Surely, research of this nature will require resources as funding, time.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Wellbeing strategies of the organizations

Most respondents' well-being strategies take a broad view of well-being

Which statement best describes your organization's well-being strategy?

Our well-being strategy is comprehensive and integrated into the way we design work and develop our workforce experience to provide purpose and meaning

21%

Our well-being strategy focuses on the physical, mental, and financial health of our employees

34%

Our well-being strategy focuses on the physical health of our employees

13%

Our well-being strategy is focused on managing occupational safety

15%

We do not have a well-being strategy

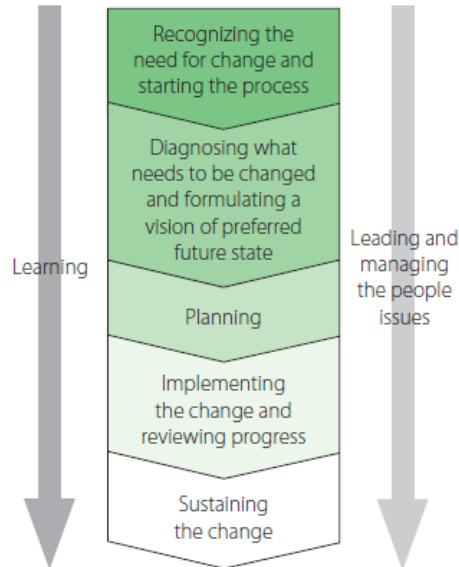
17%

Source: Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey, 2020.

Appendix 2. Kurt Lewin's three-step process



Appendix 3. The process model of change



Source: Hayes, J., 2014. *The theory and practice of change management*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Appendix 4. The survey questions

1. What is your age? Ваш возраст?
2. What is your gender? Ваш пол?
 - Male (Мужчина)
 - Female (Женщина)
 - Transgender (Трансгендер)
 - Other (Другой)
 - Non-binary (небинарный гендер)
3. What is your graduation year ? В каком году вы окончили КАЗГЮУ?
 - 2017
 - 2018
 - 2019

- 2020
- 2021

4. What was your speciality? Укажите вашу специальность в КАЗГЮУ?

- Finance (Финансы)
- Management (Менеджмент)
- Accounting and auditing (Учет и аудит)
- Economics (Экономика)

5. What is your marital status? Ваше семейное положение?

- Never married (Не замужем/не женат)
- Married or civil union (Замужем/женат или гр. брак)
- Divorced (разведен/а)
- Separated (живем отдельно)
- Living with partner (живем с партнером)

6. What is your employment status? Каков ваш статус занятости?

- Employed full time (Работаю полный рабочий день)
- Employed part time (Работаю неполный рабочий день)
- Self-employed full time (Самозанятый/ая и работаю полный рабочий день)
- Self-employed part time (Самозанятый/ая и работаю неполный рабочий день)
- Not employed, but looking for work (Не трудоустроен/а, но ищу работу)
- Not employed and not looking for work (Не трудоустроен и не ищу работу)
- Not employed, unable to work due to a disability or illness (Не трудоустроен/а, не могу работать из-за инвалидности или болезни.)
- Student (Студент)

- Maternity leave (Декретный отпуск)

7. Please select the sector of the business you are working at? Пожалуйста, выберите сектор бизнеса, в котором вы работаете?

- SME LLP (МСБ ТОО)
- Banks and financial institutions (Банки и финансовые институты)
- Quasi-state (Квазигосударственный)
- Big 4 (Биг 4)
- State (Государственный)
- Large business, including international companies (Крупный бизнес, в том числе международные компании)
- Hospitality companies (Предприятия сферы гостеприимства)
- Educational enterprises (Предприятия сферы образования)
- Other

8. Please indicate your monthly income? Укажите ваш ежемесячный доход?

- 0-60.000 KZT
- 60.000 - 120.000KZT
- 120.000-180.000KZT
- 180.000-240.000KZT
- 240.000-300.000KZT
- 300.000-360.000KZT
- 360.000-420.000KZT
- 420.000-480.000KZT
- 480.000-540.000KZT
- 540.000-600.000KZT

- 600.000KZT+
- Other

9. In general, how would you describe your mental health at the moment? В целом, как бы вы описали свое психическое (психологическое) здоровье на данный момент?

- Very good (Очень хорошее)
- Good (Хорошее)
- Neither good nor poor (ни хорошее, ни плохое)
- Poor (Плохое)
- Very poor (Очень плохое)

10. In general, how would you describe your physical health at the moment? В целом, как бы вы описали свое физическое здоровье на данный момент?

- Very good (Очень хорошее)
- Good (Хорошее)
- Neither good nor poor (ни хорошее, ни плохое)
- Poor (Плохое)
- Very poor (Очень плохое)

11. At my work I feel full of energy. На работе я чувствую себя полным энергии.

- Always (Всегда)
- Sometimes (Иногда)
- Never (Никогда)

12. At my work I feel enthusiastic about my job. На работе я с энтузиазмом отношусь к своей работе.

- Always (Всегда)
- Sometimes (Иногда)
- Never (Никогда)

13. At my work I feel exhausted. На работе я чувствую себя истощенным.

- Always (Всегда)
- Sometimes (Иногда)
- Never (Никогда)

14. At my work I feel under excessive pressure. На работе я чувствую чрезмерное давление.

- Always (Всегда)
- Sometimes (Иногда)
- Never (Никогда)

15. My organisation encourages staff to talk openly about mental health problems. Моя организация поощряет сотрудников открыто говорить о проблемах с психическим здоровьем. (Если вы являетесь руководителем предприятия, оцените себя как руководитель)

- Agree (Согласен/на)
- Neither agree nor disagree (Ни согласен/а, ни несогласен/а)
- Disagree (Не согласен/а)

16. My organisation is supportive of people's mental health. Моя организация поддерживает психическое здоровье людей.

- Agree (Согласен/на)

- Neither agree nor disagree (Ни согласен/а, ни несогласен/а)
- Disagree (Не согласен/а)

17. In a normal week, the workload in your job...В обычную неделю рабочая нагрузка на вашей работе...

- too much (слишком много)
- about right (соответствует норме)
- too little (слишком мало)

18. I usually have enough time to get my work done within my allocated hours. Обычно у меня достаточно времени, чтобы выполнить свою работу в отведенные мне часы.

- Agree (Согласен/на)
- Neither agree nor disagree (Ни согласен/а, ни несогласен/а)
- Disagree (Не согласен/а)

19. In the last three months, have you ever worked in your main job despite not feeling well enough to perform your duties? За последние три месяца вы когда-нибудь работали на своей основной работе, несмотря на то, что чувствовали себя недостаточно хорошо, чтобы выполнять свои обязанности?

- Yes
- No

20. My immediate supervisor, line manager or boss is supportive if I have a problem. Мой непосредственный руководитель, линейный руководитель или начальник поддерживает меня, если у меня возникают проблемы. (Если вы являетесь руководителем предприятия, оцените себя как руководитель)

- Agree (Согласен/на)
- Neither agree nor disagree (Ни согласен/а, ни несогласен/а)
- Disagree (Не согласен/а)

21. My immediate supervisor, line manager or boss is open and approachable on issues like mental health. Мой непосредственный руководитель, линейный руководитель или начальник открыт и открыт для общения по таким вопросам, как психическое здоровье. (Если вы являетесь руководителем предприятия, оцените себя как руководитель)

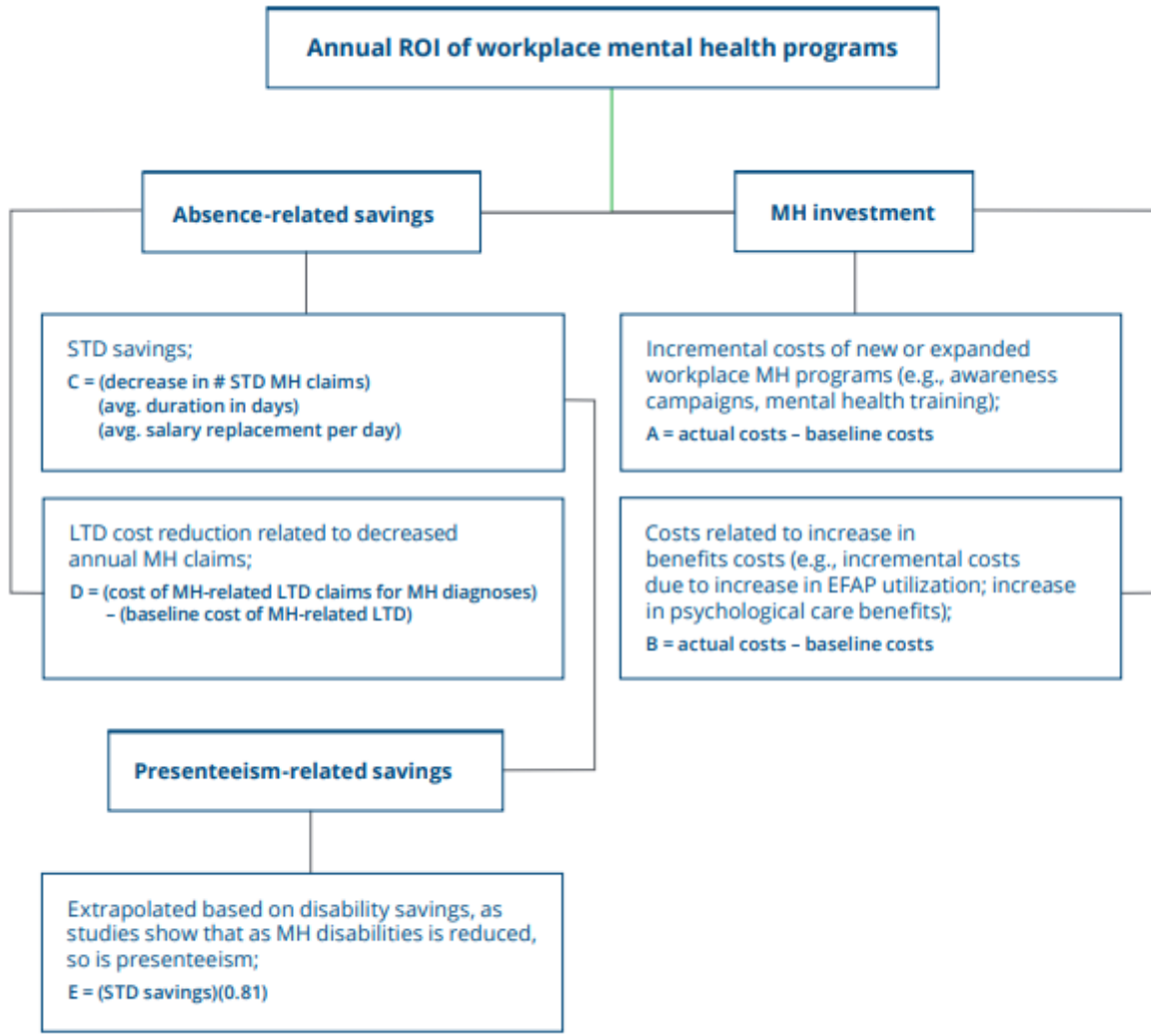
- Agree (Согласен/на)
- Neither agree nor disagree (Ни согласен/а, ни несогласен/а)
- Disagree (Не согласен/а)

22. Do you have a work-life balance programs in the workplace? If yes, please provide examples. If no, would you like and what kind of? Есть ли у вас программы баланса между работой и личной жизнью на рабочем месте? Если да, приведите примеры. Если нет, то хотели бы и какие?

Appendix 5. Interview questions

1. Short Bio (Age, graduation year, position)
2. Please indicate three advantages and three disadvantages of your current company.
3. Is your organization dedicated to employee wellbeing?
4. Does your culture support employee wellbeing?
5. Does your manager care about employee wellbeing?
6. Do you have employee wellbeing strategies or initiatives?
7. If respondent answer yes to five questions additionally how? Could you provide us with examples?

Appendix 6. Methodology of calculating WROI



Source: Deloitte analysis.