wellbeing can impact on overall workplace wellbeing significantly. In addition, workplace wellbeing is often conflated with employee engagement and job satisfaction, two key HRM KPIs (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Spence, 2015; Summers et al, 2019). Understanding what workplace wellbeing encompasses is thus a priority, and this study aims to look at the notion through the lens of the employers who are involved in the design or implementation of workplace wellbeing. This paper hence seeks to explore what constitutes workplace wellbeing, and how workplace wellbeing initiatives are perceived to function.

Reality around workplace wellbeing has become more accentuated recently. With the emergence of the Covid- 19 pandemic, workplace wellbeing has become a focal point for HRM practitioners. The capability of an organisation to maintain a healthy and productive workforce during Covid-19 was a new challenge, one that few had experienced previously. Practices were adapted for Working from Home (WFH) allowing for organisational continuity and new workplace environments became realities within very short timeframes and with minimal preparation. Specifically, for this study, on the 26th of March 2020, the New Zealand Government announced a nationwide lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (Palmer, 2020). The lockdown saw all non-essential services closed, while essential services such as supermarkets and health services remained open but with restrictions (Palmer, 2020). Organisations were obliged to have all employees Work From Home (WFH) for the duration of the lockdown, while utilising technological software as means of communication and connection with colleagues and stakeholders. Given the rapid changes and adaptations to the workforce, workplace wellbeing became a key focus for HRM practitioners. With the expectation that the pandemic would see considerable implications on workplace wellbeing, this study set out to explore employers' perception of workplace wellbeing and workplace wellbeing arrangements during Covid-19.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining and conceptualising workplace wellbeing

While interest in workplace wellbeing, or the lack of it, has been an area that has contributed to both debate and the formation of political movements during the last two centuries, the modern concept of what is workplace wellbeing and aspects that form workplace wellbeing emerged during 1970s (Carmichael, Fenton, Pinilla Roncancio, Sing & Sadhra, 2014; Spence, 2015; Summers et al, 2019; Warr, 2007). Workplace wellbeing as a research area isn't limited by seeing contributions from primarily one discipline, rather, it is a topic that has seen interest and contributions from scholars of several disciplines, such as economy, psychology, health, HRM and sociology, to name a few (Carmichael et al, 2019; Kowalski & Loretto, 2017). This has led to workplace wellbeing contributions emerging in topics such as employee satisfaction, work-life balance, subjective wellbeing, general health outcomes and psychological health (Pescud, Teal Shilton, Slevin, Ledger, Waterworth & Rosenberg, 2015; Shain & Kramer, 2004). With such a broad domain of topics contributing to workplace wellbeing, there is difficulty to see any consensus within literature regarding what workplace wellbeing entails and how it is defined. Definitions of workplace wellbeing are often varied and takes their origin in the applied lens employed by the respective researchers. This is reflected in literature, where research output is often linked to applied lenses and specific topic conceptualisations of workplace wellbeing. One workplace wellbeing definition that is more neutral is often used in research, it was proposed by Sauter, Lim and Murphy (1996, p. 250) and state that "workplace wellbeing

maximises the integration of worker goals for wellbeing and company objectives for profitability and productivity". This definition is one that attempt to align interests of employee and employer since it suggests that the role of wellbeing is interrelated to the organisational outcomes such as profitability and productivity.

Workplace wellbeing conceptualisation is common in literature, and literature exploring workplace wellbeing have often investigated the concept from one perspective, be it physical, psychological, emotional or social (Conrad, 1988; Grant, Christianson & Price, 2007; Loon, Otaye-Ebede & Stewart, 2019; Smith, Kaminstein & Makadok, 1995). Those that look at workplace wellbeing from a physical perspective often argue that specific initiative(s) may improve workplace wellbeing. One example of this is Pronk, Martinson, Kessler, Ronald, Beck, Simon & Wang (2004), who argue that higher level of physical fitness was associated with less absenteeism in the workplace. Research into the role of psychological wellbeing in the workplace tends to focus on the subjective experiences of individuals (Grant et al, 2007; Xanthopoulou, Bakker & Ilies, 2012). For example, Pescud et al (2015) who stated that employees with positive psychological attributes were more likely to be highly productive employees, more liked colleagues, use safe work practices and have a better work-life balance. More recently, Loon et al., (2019) argued that that psychological wellbeing, for example, perception can impact strongly on organisational outcomes; an employee with positive perception is more engaged with their work and colleagues. Meanwhile, social researchers have attempted to conceptualise workplace wellbeing by studying the interactions that occur among people in the workplace, trust, reciprocity, cooperation and support (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000; Kramer, 1999). These different approaches investigated workplace wellbeing from one perspective, however, literature has suggested that one perspective may not be sufficient in providing the full understanding, and that there is a multitude of factors that can interact or overlap in informing the understanding of workplace wellbeing (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Meyer & Malton, 2010; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). Despite the lack of consensus and definition, all researchers agree that workplace wellbeing continues to be an important consideration for organisations due to its impact on overall organisational outcomes.

Research on workplace wellbeing

Research into workplace wellbeing is not new. Its early beginnings can be traced to medicine and psychology. Primarily we saw a focus on stress and its negative effects on the human and this led to some researchers looking at the role of occupational stress and its relationship with physical and psychological wellbeing (Kahn & Quinn, 1970; Margolis, Kroes & Quinn, 1974). While stress and its role on wellbeing had seen research undertaken, what we today call workplace wellbeing is often stated to have begun with seminal work carried out by Cooper and Marshall (1976). They identified five categories of stress that employees may experience at work and discussed these. They also argued that it was not just at work employees can became stressed, but also in their private life where financial and family issues can cause stress that employees would bring to their workplaces. This broadened the context of how workplace wellbeing was perceived to be considered effective (Cooper & Marshall, 1978). Such consideration saw a focus on the topic of work and job satisfaction, and its influence on workplace wellbeing. This paradigm shift saw findings to support the connection between work and non-work domains. For example, Rice, Near and Hunt (1980) found that people who reported satisfaction with their work also tend to

be satisfied with other domains of their life, while people who reported dissatisfaction with their work also tend to be dissatisfied with other domains of their life.

Conrad (1988) added to the aforementioned phenomenon by discussing the 'spill over' effects which recognised that a person's work and personal lives are not separate entities, instead, they are interconnected and can therefore have reciprocal effects on each other. This clarified that workplace wellbeing is not limited to what goes on at work, but private life also affects work performance and individual wellbeing (Conrad, 1988; Staw & Barsade, 1993; Warr, 1990). Cooper and Cartwright (1994), added to this, they found that work-related stress combined with stress from everyday life can lead to adverse physical and emotional performance, and hence for workplace wellbeing it is important to consider. Whilst these studies were addressing the individual consequences due to workplace and everyday stress, there was a lack of emphasis on the organisational consequences. To address this, Danna and Griffin (1999) proposed a framework of workplace wellbeing with the goal of moving the topic towards organisational research and outcomes, in which certain consequences such as productivity and absenteeism are considered. This framework is substantial because it is the first approach to workplace wellbeing that attempted to incorporate not just one perspective, but instead provided a framework for workplace wellbeing practice. However, whilst it considered interventions that could be applied, no further discussions were provided to inform their role on an individual or organisational level. To address this, DeJoy and Wilson (2003) proposed that workplace wellbeing interventions must be introduced at an organisational level, instead of a departmental or group level for it to be successful. They also identified five categories that can be used to influence outcomes on an employee level and an organisational level. Grawitch, Gottschalk and Munz (2006) subsequently added to this by expanding on the linkages of workplace wellbeing interventions on a set of identified employee outcomes and organisational improvements. With linkages between workplace wellbeing and organisational outcomes established, research shifted towards looking at different streams of workplace wellbeing.

Ryan and Deci (2001) in their much-cited publication distinguished between two streams of workplace wellbeing research, hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. The former refers to positive emotions and is typically represented by attaining pleasure and avoiding pain, while the latter refers to positive functioning, and is represented by meaning and self-realisation (Diener, 1984; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). These two distinct views have provided different focus to research which can be contrasting or complementary (Waterman et al, 2010). Culbertson, Fullagar and Mills (2010) stated that hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing are complementary perspectives in understanding workplace wellbeing. In their study, eudaimonic wellbeing was significantly associated with daily positive mood and daily life satisfaction, suggesting that an employee's sense of fulfilment and self-realisation in the workplace can affect their mood and satisfaction with life. Another study, conducted by Fave, Brdar, Freire, Vella-Brodick & Wissing (2011) reported similar findings, however they added that family and social relations were strongly associated with positive emotions and life meaningfulness. On the other hand, Straume and Vittersø (2012) reported that hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing have different roles in the regulation of employee behaviours, since the two feeling states can behave quite differently in the context of difficult work situations, thus the need to be distinguished from each other. This notion is also supported by Albuquerque, de Lima, Matos and Figueirdo (2014) who reported that hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing are different and independent

concepts of wellbeing, with eudaimonic wellbeing measures more permeable to the effects of work activities. Recently, Bartel, Peterson and Reina (2019) introduced a work specific eudaimonic conceptualisation and measure for scholars and practitioners. They believed a workplace conceptualisation was of particular importance as it provides a subjective evaluation of an employee's own ability to develop and function optimally within the workplace context. Despite their differences and the roles they play in affecting wellbeing, scholars have agreed that both the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives are important in understanding employees' workplace wellbeing given the amount of time and effort individuals spend in their workplaces (Bartels et al, 2019).

Whilst the conceptualisation of workplace wellbeing has seen progression over time, there is consensus among scholars that a comprehensive and holistic view to workplace wellbeing is important to ensure employees are supported in feeling good and functioning well within the workplace context (Bartel et al, 2019; Loon et al, 2019). Kowalski and Loretto (2017) argued that a comprehensive and holistic approach is crucial in conceptualising workplace wellbeing since poor wellbeing can have adverse effects on productivity and performance, as well as extending beyond the workplace context. Consequently, Bartel et al (2019) also argued that the silo approach current measures adopt often lack specificity on workplace wellbeing, strengthening the need for a more comprehensive and holistic approach. In addition, organisations are acknowledging the importance of their workforce in achieving and maintaining competitive advantage in the rapidly changing nature of workplaces (Nielsen, Nielsen, Ogbonnaya, Känsälä, Saari & Isaksson, 2017). This realisation has thus prompted employers to actively explore viable workplace wellbeing initiatives to ensure a healthy and productive workforce is available to promote workplace wellbeing with the view of maintaining the organisations' competitive advantage in the long term (Edgar et al, 2015; Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Nielsen et al, 2017; Parkinson, 2018). In regards to specific studies on workplace wellbeing during Covid-19, for logical reasons, few have yet been published, but Sibley et al (2020) investigated the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, and found that during the initial stages of the lockdown there were minimal short-term detrimental effects on psychological and physical health as well as the subjective wellbeing of individuals.

Research Approach

This research aims to look at workplace wellbeing from the perspective of the employers. The data collection was conducted within a larger research project "Workplace wellbeing: current status and key practices within Aotearoa New Zealand". However, due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic, the interviews undertaken in June 2020 encountered a changed landscape compared with the original intentions of the study, and workplace wellbeing and its lived realities was perceived to be viewed differently in light of the emergent pandemic. Our point of departure was that it was primarily important to research the participants' own experiences and opinions and not their employers' official positions. Although the study was based on the perceptions of ten participants, we believe that the findings will offer an interesting insight into workplace wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand during Covid-19, and this sampling criteria would allow us to reach those that could provide a rich detailed narrative.

In order to explore the perceptions of workplace wellbeing during Covid-19, in-depth semi-structured interviews were the chosen method. The choice of semi-structured

interviews offers several advantages for this particular research; the rigidity of its structure can be varied depending on the participant (Kelly, 2010) and it enables reciprocity between the researcher and participant, something of importance when perceptions and views of a current phenomenon is investigated (Galletta, 2012). Semi-structured interviews also allow the interviewer to ask follow-up questions when required, and probe further when something of interest is discussed (DiCiccio-Bloom, & Crabtree, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Polit & Beck, 2010). These methods assist with gaining in-depth understanding of the phenomena of interest. The interviews were conducted in July to August 2020, while originally planned to be in person, due to Covid-19, they were held virtually utilising Zoom. We adhered to the work of Minichiello (2008) on how to construct an interview questionnaire and ensured there were a variety of questions (a total of 17) that enabled us to focus on the descriptive and comparative aspects to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the topic.

This study employed a non-probability sampling, namely purposive sampling technique. This sampling technique is commonly used for qualitative research and is seen as suitable for semi-structured interviews (Galetta, 2012). This sampling method does not aim to identify and select participants randomly, rather, participants are identified and selected based on the established sampling criteria established before sampling is commenced (Patton, 1990). Our participants were all based in Aotearoa New Zealand. The sample was defined as a Manager who is formally responsible for workplace wellbeing decisions, practices and processes within the organisation. It was assumed that this was most likely be an HR Manager or a more modern name for it like 'Manager People and Culture'. Purposive sampling fits with the choice of participants for this study since this study actively seeks information-rich participants who can be studied in-depth. Purposive sampling is also recommended when there are a limited number of potential participants, hence, allowing the researcher to target specific participants who will contribute their experiences, perceptions and understandings (Seidman, 2006; Rudestam & Newton, 2001). There was specific effort spent to ensure that the participants represented different working environments and within the sample we aimed for as many ISCI main codes represented as possible. The spread allows us to gain insights not just from one industry but perspective from across business in New Zealand. A detailed breakdown of the participants is found in Table 1. The names of the participants have been anonymised for confidentiality using a numeric instead of a potentially identifiable pseudonym.

Table 1: Participant information

Participant	Industry	Number of employees	Participant Position	Years in role	Gender
1	Financial services	100	HR Manager	6	Male
2	Agribusiness	2,300	HR Manager	3	Male
3	Engineering	700	People and Capability Executive	4	Female
4	Utility services	800	Manager People and Culture	3	Female
5	Education	130	HR Manager	6	Male
6	Industrial	300	HR Manager	9	Male
7	Banking	4,900	Manager People and Culture	2	Female
8	Public sector	500	HR Manager	4	Male
9	Retail	600	HR Manager	3	Male
10	Logistics	250	Manager People and Performance	5	Male
11	Oil and Gas	180	HR Manager	7	Female
12	Public service	3,000	Manager People and Culture	4	Male
13	Pharmaceuticals	700	HR Manager	5	Female
14	Retail	350	HR Manager	3	Male
15	Manufacturing	300	Manager People and Culture	6	Female
16	Finance	300	HR Manager	8	Female
17	FMCG	800	Manager People and Culture	3	Male
18	Public sector	500	HR Manager	5	Male
19	Industrial services	170	HR Manager	9	Female
20	FMCG	300	HR Manager	2	Female

To analyse the data collected from the interviews, we applied a thematic analysis. Using a thematic analysis allows researchers to identify, analyse and discuss reoccurring patterns identified within participants' narratives (Boyatzis, 1998). Using a thematic analysis allows researchers to identify and understand experiences, or views and perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The thematic analysis we employed adhered to the work of Braun and Clarke (2013), who suggest a six-phase process to identify themes. The thematic analysis allowed us to identify a total of seven unique themes.

Findings and Discussions

The main themes that emerged focused on the processes and shortcomings of present workplace wellbeing initiatives. There are two distinct groupings of themes. One focuses on the practice around workplace wellbeing initiatives that the organisations offer, which saw considerable reflections as a direct result of the changed reality that many practitioners experienced during Covid-19 lockdown. The second focus on workplace wellbeing

initiatives that were used during the Covid-19 lockdown. In order to highlight themes, selected interview quotes from the transcribed interviews will be used. Whilst it is a personal selection from the transcripts, we believe that the quotes can be seen as good proxies for the experiences and views shared by the participants.

The first grouping of themes all emerged from a realisation that present practices were not all they were set out to be. This frustration with the practices that existed, saw three distinct themes emerge and these were consistently reiterated among the participants. In this case, the first real theme refers to the 'lack of structured workplace wellbeing framework', the second being 'workplace wellbeing initiatives are not measured for impact', and third being 'a lack of strategic congruence'. The second grouping of themes focus on how the participants handled the lockdown that mandated employees WFH. It focusses on workplace wellbeing and its initiatives during Covid-19 lockdown period, the role of family/whānau, ergonomics of workplace during lockdown and provision of workplace wellbeing initiatives.

Theme 1 – A lack of structured workplace wellbeing framework

The participants reflected that they had often adopted ad-hoc approaches, and had often introduced workplace wellbeing initiatives that were either based on the suggestions from a few employees, external organisation or consultants, or by following what they have read from institutions such as the Human Resources Institute of New Zealand. However, upon reflection, participants have realised that they had several overlapping initiatives, and no clarity around what impact such initiatives have had on workplace wellbeing.

> P4: "The only thing structured around workplace wellbeing is OH&S and that is because we fall under the Health and Safety Act"
>
> P12: "Workplace wellbeing are several well-meaning initiatives that have been introduced over the last few years. These initiatives are useful stand-alone initiatives, but they lack cohesion"

The lack of structure, frameworks and duplicating initiatives are not uncommon phenomenon's that just our participants have experienced. In fact, the lack of a structured approaches to workplace wellbeing has been constant themes found within literature (Gratwich et al, 2006; Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Loon et al, 2019; Waterman et al, 2010). Participants have also shared their views on the similarities of workplace wellbeing initiatives that tend to focus on one aspect of wellbeing, rather than complementary initiatives that can be used address a more holistic aspect of wellbeing.

> P1: "When I reflect on our initiatives there is obvious duplications, we offer free gym cards, we offer box fit at work, we offer instructor led early morning workouts, but we don't offer anything for the families for example. We offer external professional coaches, we have a formalised mentor-system at work, and we offer self-development initiatives, yet we don't offer any stress relieving initiatives. We haven't had oversight. I won't be the only one questioning some of the spending that has gone towards workplace wellbeing…"

These duplications were believed to have occurred due to the lack of structure and the lack of transparency regarding how workplace wellbeing initiative were introduced. There was also a sense of lack of purpose among some participants as they felt that suggestions for

workplace wellbeing was more akin to rewards, for example, gym membership, rather than workplace wellbeing initiatives. Research agrees with this and state that there has been a focus on eudemonic initiatives aimed at making employees happier, hedonic initiatives are rarer and there is often am imbalance within the initiatives where several eudemonic initiatives focus on one wellbeing aspect (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Bartels et al, 2019). There was also a lack of data regarding the uptake surrounding some of the initiatives, for example, how many employees go to the gym together or how many employees signed up to the gym. It was felt that presently, other dimensions of workplace wellbeing have not been considered in relation to current workplace wellbeing initiatives. This perception adhered to literature which stated that a range of workplace wellbeing initiatives, covering the social, physical, psychological and emotional aspects must be considered in order for it to be effective (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011; Grant et al, 2007; Loon et al, 2019).

Theme 2 – Workplace wellbeing initiatives are not measured for impact

Critique against some workplace wellbeing programmes have been offered, it is stated that implemented initiatives are rarely data driven, and based on organisational needs, gaps analysis or other validated data (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Pescud et al, 2015). This view was also shared by participants who shared that the measurement for each wellbeing initiative have not been constructed, thus none of the participants were provided with the tool to measure any successful workplace wellbeing initiatives. Instead, the most commonly used measurement tools were based on the occupational health and safety records, showcasing the number of workplace injuries or incidents, and job satisfaction surveys, which are completed annually or as part of performance reviews. This lack of measurement of workplace wellbeing initiatives have been noted previously in literature (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Bartels et al, 2019). Literature has also highlighted that presently there is rarely clarity on how workplace wellbeing initiatives is stated to contribute towards employee performance (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Bartels et al, 2019).

> P7: "We also lack clarity around the individual initiatives contribution to wellbeing. We have not investigated the impact of these initiatives, all we have is results from our employee satisfaction survey and it does not specifically ask about any initiatives"

These perceptions that were held by participants regarding the lack connections between each workplace wellbeing initiative adhered to literature who has frequently noticed that there is a lack of verifiable proof for a linkage between one specific workplace initiative and overall improved workplace wellbeing (Edgar et al, 2015). Some researchers however argue that measuring individual initiatives does not make sense since it is the holistic approach that generate workplace wellbeing (Guest, 2017; Loon et al, 2019). However, in the case of our participants, they did not apply a holistic approach, they had constructed their workplace wellbeing initiatives more based on what was deemed a need at that particular moment, being reactionary rather than working strategically.

Theme 3 – The lack of strategic congruence

There was also a discussion around the perceived lack of strategic congruence between the workplace wellbeing initiatives to the organisation's key values, mission, vision and culture. The ability to demonstrate how workplace wellbeing contributes to these set goals were deemed important by some participants, but the implementation of the workplace wellbeing initiatives did not consider these.

P9: "A key organisational value for us is collaboration, yet we don't have any workplace wellbeing initiative that fosters this…"

The need to provide strategic congruence is often stated as a key enabler and authenticator among management and HRM literature (Nilsson & Rapp, 2005; Noe et al, 2017). The consideration whether there are linkages between workplace wellbeing initiatives and organisational culture, values, mission and vision has been stated as key area where further awareness is needed. However, workplace wellbeing literature rarely considers strategic congruence, and the few studies that have considered it have not found evidence for it being a priority (Haski-Leventhal, Roza, & Meijs, 2017).

Theme 4 – Disconnect between management expectations and HR reality

Due to the increased attention on the effects of lockdown may have on the mental and emotional health of individuals, there were consistent discussions about maintaining connection with each other through the use of technology. Senior management advocated for workplace wellbeing through the means of regular updates and meetings with staff members during the working week, advocating that this touch base approach would suffice. HR management disagreed with the approach suggested by senior management, since they met with employees daily and saw that things were not functioning and that workplace meetings did not provide wellbeing. Their reality was that scheduled meetings were another work task and not workplace wellbeing initiatives.

P18: "Management suggested that daily Zoom meetings would allow team leaders to monitor the wellbeing of the employees. Such suggestions didn't help us, it just showed how little management grasped about online work and about workplace wellbeing. We needed real workplace wellbeing initiatives but what they suggested was further tasks."

Participants also noted that since some employees struggled with the experience of utilising online communication tools such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams this delayed progress and operational tasks, not just these employees but for most that were WFH. At the same time management wated to showcase positive successes and this led to additional stress and unnecessary pressure being applied. The first few weeks was seen, by the participants, as being weeks of problem solving rather than working proactively or delivering with high productivity. It was noted that

P15: "… It wasn't really until the second or third week that we considered the employees wellbeing. Until then we just worked flat out making things work. I cant say that certain managers insistence of showcasing success and pretending that all was perfect helped. To the contrary it just created anxiety among employees and a disconnect between what they experienced and what management stated was happening."

Theme 5 – Employee driven social workplace wellbeing initiatives

After early difficulties had been overcome and work patterns functioned, more attention was given towards workplace wellbeing initiatives. The focus was on social wellbeing and mostly rudimentary initiatives. Some participants couriered food baskets to staff members and scheduled virtual coffee breaks. All of them also scheduled virtual Friday drinks. However, they all felt that they lacked the tools to work meaningfully with workplace

wellbeing during the lockdown and that social initiatives were the only suggestions that were realistic and it would generate bonding, trust and a feeling that employees were cared for and not forgotten.

> P19: "We didn't have workplace wellbeing initiatives that worked during lockdown, in fact we hardly had any workplace wellbeing initiatives at all. So we did what we could with limited resources. Plenty of virtual lunches and virtual drinks."

A focus on social wellbeing initiatives has been supported by key literature. Kramer (1999) and Bradbury and Lichtenstein (2000) argued that interactions occurring among people in the workplace can generate trust, reciprocity, cooperation and support. These interactions are stated to be especially important when change is occurring, and well managed such interactions would help workplace wellbeing and productivity (Chen & Cooper, 2014). Organisational commitment theory has also suggested that when employees feel valued and supported by their employers, they develop a sense of commitment to the organisation which can affect several workplace behaviour, such as performance (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Theme 6 – The role of family/whānau in workplace wellbeing

Among the participants, there was shared perception on the important role of family/whānau on workplace wellbeing. The role of family on workplace wellbeing is an old concept in literature investigated by Cooper & Marshall (1978), who identified that stress from family can impact on workplace wellbeing. The impact of Covid-19 on the partner, children and extended family members/whānau during the lockdown period led to some employees expressing stress that was outside of their control.

> P3: "One employee struggled a lot during lockdown. She was worried, didn't meet deadlines and performed poorly. When queried she stated that she was worried about the future, that her husband was likely to be made redundant and what it would mean for the family."

These are issues outside the realm of the participants, but they do state that it was obvious how much other people and their situations affected the employees. Several participants noted that this was much more obvious during the lockdown. The detrimental effects on the physical and emotional wellbeing due to perceived stress over family and its determinantal effect on workplace wellbeing and negative impact on performance has been supported by literature. Both Zedeck and Mosier (1990) and Cooper and Cartwright (1994) pointed out that stress and worry that are related to the lives of close family members can impact upon employees' wellbeing and overall performance. Financial stress during the lockdown period was expressed by some employees, due to the increased in demand for internet data or laptops. This has been highlighted by a recent study undertaken by Sibley et al (2020), in which they reported that the financial insecurity resulting from the lockdown is likely to affect the physical and psychological health of people.

Theme 7 – Working environment and potential OH&S implications

The workplace set up was a constant issue, such as the lack of IT infrastructure and the desk space. Most participants provided financial support for the monthly internet bill, and in some instances paid for upgrades bandwidth or unlimited fibre. They also provided additional laptops or tablets where needed. However, these participants did not believe

this initiative will continue after the lockdown. Whilst providing the tools required for employees to be able to carry out their tasks, participants have also identified an area in the work environment which was out of their control, namely, the ergonomics and health and safety requirements of the employees' workstation.

> P6: "Being in a meeting, noticing a colleague sitting on a stool at the kitchen table worries me. It is not a suitable working position and while these are extraordinary times, the lack of supervision and control over workstations at home has me worried about potential ramifications…"
>
> P14: "…this lack of control of the WFH environment is something that will need to be legally addressed before I am prepared to offer continued WFH for employees after the lockdown…"

The role of workplace hazard is an area that has been studied by scholars (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Carmichael et al, 2014; Pescud et al, 2015) and there is evidence to support that workplace health and safety can have major consequences on wellbeing. Finally, our participants have expressed concerns about the potential negative effects on the mental health of their employees due to the lockdown. Whilst initiatives to address mental health challenges, such as counselling, are not provided within the organisation, employees were encouraged and reminded to seek support from external providers such as Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). However, information collected from external providers have shown little uptake of this service to date, which the participants have viewed as a positive outcome. This finding reinforces the findings from Sibley et al (2020) whereby the lockdown had minimal short-term effects on participants' health and subjective wellbeing. In addition, this study also found no significant difference was found on mental distress between the pre-lockdown and post-lockdown groups based on their pre-determined criteria. Despite this, most participants have stated that raising awareness of all aspects of psychological wellbeing is an important consideration for future workplace wellbeing initiatives and would explore providing mindfulness or stress management training. Raising awareness for psychological wellbeing is seen as a key contributor to workplace wellbeing and improved organisational performance and higher job satisfaction (Waterman et al, 2010; Guest, 2017).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Whilst this study has provided insight into employer's perception of workplace wellbeing initiatives during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, it is important to keep in mind that these findings and insights are only applicable to the participants involved in the study. This is an explorative study, one where the number of participants is limited, and this is a limitation. However, we believe the number is sufficient for the findings to be relevant and likely representative of a larger sample. It should be noted that a study with a larger sample of HR practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand is forthcoming. Despite limitations, the findings have provided insights into workplace wellbeing initiatives, and also its variation during a pandemic. In the interest of progressing the understanding for future research, we offer the following considerations at both macro and micro level. Firstly, further empirical studies from real world organisations are needed, recently many studies use academic sampling thus more empirical data collected from real organisations is needed. Second, the outcomes of the individual workplace wellbeing initiatives require

further investigation analysis. Presently, the impact of workplace wellbeing initiatives is not qualified or quantified, an area that further research could consider. Thirdly, there is a desire to gain a better understanding of how workplace wellbeing initiatives work together, thus, there is a need for further macro studies looking at how interrelated initiatives align with workplace wellbeing outcomes. Finally, if triangulation is pursued, the implications can reveal different strands of vantage points based on positions assumed by participants in the organisation, for example, variation work capacity, roles or leadership. These narratives can show depth of human experience depicting how they conceptualise and read the situation of their employees.

CONCLUSION

Due to a paucity of literature studying employers' perception of workplace wellbeing, this study sought to answer that call. The empirical data we presented shows that there is strong agreement on the future importance of structured workplace wellbeing. The findings from the participants offered insights into their perception of workplace initiatives, as well as the type of workplace wellbeing initiatives that were offered to promote workplace wellbeing during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

Our findings have provided insight that is not common in present workplace wellbeing initiatives literature. Participants indicated that they believed that prior workplace wellbeing had not been structured or formalised. Instead ad-hoc initiatives without interrelation had dominated. There is also an acknowledgement that presently the workplace wellbeing initiatives are not considered holistically, whereby psychological, physical and social initiatives are combined and aligned, something that may reduce the overall positive impact on workplace wellbeing. There is also a focus on hedonic initiatives while most participants stated that eudemonic initiatives see less prevalence. Further consideration to the combination of the initiatives and how they can be measured will thus be sought and is an area where further considerations are expected. In addition, there is also evidence from this study to support literature that current workplace wellbeing initiatives often do not see any congruence to the organisation's values, mission, vision and culture. In fact, these initiatives are introduced and implemented based on the suggestions of a few employees or through recommendations from institutes or consultants, without an understanding of the needs of employees.

Specific Covid-19 concerns were noted, whereby participants expressed concerns of employees who were WFH with poor ergonomic set up and lack of proper equipment. This finding supports current literature around the role of workplace hazard and wellbeing and has important implication and should be given due consideration if employees are to continue WFH due to the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, whilst participants have not noted an increase in uptake of external support, such as EAP during the lockdown, they have expressed the desire to raise awareness of psychological wellbeing and considers this an area where initiatives can be introduced to improve workplace wellbeing, job satisfaction and overall organisational performance.

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